

UNBRIDLED SPIRIT:

Best Practices in Educational Administration

THE 2006 YEARBOOK OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF PROFESSORS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Edited by
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You are reading the 2006 NCPEA YEARBOOK titled *Unbridled Spirit: Best Practices in Educational Administration*. This yearbook is being distributed to all of the registered participants of the 2006 NCPEA Summer Conference, to be held in Lexington, Kentucky. “Unbridled Spirit” is the motto for Kentucky, hence inclusion in the title for the yearbook. This year, the NCPEA Executive Board approved a new review process for the yearbook enabling us to “unbridle” ourselves from past procedures. Usually only completed manuscripts were reviewed for inclusion in the yearbook. However, this year, we wanted the theme of the yearbook to mirror that of the 2006 NCPEA Summer Conference, and we wanted to include chapters from authors who were also going to be presenters at the conference. So we solicited proposals for manuscripts rather than requiring completed manuscripts for the review. Another decision that was made was to include as many different authors as possible. This resulted in the unusual length of the yearbook. This review and publication process was a “learning experience” for all involved. One of the outcomes of this learning process was the production of a policies and procedures manual to serve as a guide for future editors of the yearbook.

Inside this fourteenth volume in the series, you will find 47 chapters written by 83 authors from over 50 different institutions of higher education. There were over 60 reviewers representing over 50 different universities. These reviewers edited over 100+ manuscript submissions and 47 completed chapters. So we did accomplish our goal of involving a large number of members of NCPEA!

The submission process this year was conducted entirely online. Email messages to prospective authors carried specifications for manuscript preparation to professors interested in submitting a chapter for this yearbook. The NCPEA website also was helpful with downloadable copies of author guidelines, deadlines, and other submission information. The review process, also completed entirely online, was two stage: first a blind review of the proposals and then a peer review/edit of the completed manuscripts. Every completed manuscript was subjected to a review/edit by the NCPEA Executive Board member, and by a member of the NCPEA Publications Committee. All chapters were also edited by either me or the Assistant Editor, Linda Lemasters, with a final edit by Jessica Kastner. Manuscript submission logs and reviewer logs were created and tracked electronically. Reviewer assignments were made and manuscript submissions were sent via email attachments to reviewers, along with an evaluation form. Most reviewers were asked to read five to six manuscripts. Reviewers were instructed to edit each chapter, and make recommendations regarding publication and revisions. After their review/edit, they returned the edited manuscripts to the editor with their recommendations for revision, as needed. Authors of manuscripts were then asked to make any revisions suggested by the reviewers. Acceptance and rejection letters were also delivered electronically. The end result of this process is this yearbook that contains high quality blind peer reviewed chapters and that was on time for the publisher. My administrative assistant, Jessica Kastner handled most of this review process. In all my years as a professor, I have never had a graduate assistant who was as capable or as hard working and dedicated as Ms. Kastner. I cannot thank her enough for her able assistance on this project.

The production of this yearbook was a cooperative effort! It was possible only because you, our colleagues, submitted your work for publication in the yearbook. Thank you for, not only having confidence in your work, but also in the yearbook. The editors and reviewers spent a considerable amount of time and effort on your work to get manuscripts ready for the next level in the process. I would like to thank my co-editor Linda Lemasters, who did everything that I asked of her in an excellent and timely fashion. Members of the NCPEA Publications Committee, under the guidance of Rosemary Papa, served as reviewers. The members of the NCPEA Executive Board also reviewed/edited manuscripts. I also want to thank all of these reviewers who gave time during the fall and a busy part of the spring semester for service to NCPEA and this yearbook. The final stage of production was conducted by the able staff at ProActive Publications, under the guidance of Joe Eckenrode and Steve

Spangler. They transformed your work into the beautiful book you are holding today. As a result of this collective effort, our field is one book richer and, hopefully, wiser.

The 2006 Yearbook has four parts. Part I contains the invited chapters. One of these invited chapters was the Cocking Lecture given by Genevieve Brown, Dean of the College of Education at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Of course, no yearbook would be complete without an opening message from the current NCPEA President, Gary Martin from Northern Arizona University. Based upon their topic and content, I assigned the other chapters to one of the three Parts of the yearbook:

Part II—Best Practices in Designing Educational Administration Programs

Part III—Best Practices in Teaching Educational Administration

Part IV—Best Practices for Field Practitioners

I have attempted to group the articles by topic, both into a Part and within the Part. One could argue about a particular chapter's placement in a particular part of the yearbook, but not with the contribution it made to the entire volume. It has been a pleasure working with all of the authors and reviewers on this 2006 NCPEA Yearbook project. Please enjoy the product of our collective efforts.

Frederick L. Dembowski
Southeastern Louisiana University
July, 2006

INVITED CHAPTERS

A Challenge for Systemic Change: The President's Message

Gary E. Martin

A staggering number of professional associations, funded projects, committees, task forces and individual researchers, practitioners, and others outside of education are trying to find answers to better school leadership preparation and practice. Over the years, our major educational leadership organizations have selflessly worked to advance our field in the hopes of finding guidelines and/or standards that would improve preparation and resulting practice for increased learning in the public schools. Seminal products of these efforts include:

Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators, Hoyle/AASA

Guidelines for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership NPBEA

Guidelines for Advanced Leadership Programs in Education, ELCC

Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership, NCATE

Professional Standards for the Superintendency, AASA

Standards for Principals, NAESP

Twenty-First Century Skills, NASSP

ISLLC Standards, CCSSO

Most of the survey research from practicing school administrators supports the conclusion that university preparation programs provide the necessary knowledge and beginning skill to lead in schools. One could argue that we have the best trained and most knowledgeable school administrators in our history. Despite this, there are still some serious concerns regarding education. These include rate of dropouts, social justice issues, loss of many quality teachers, equity issues, high-stakes testing, and other problems and predicaments facing current school leaders.

The theme of the 2006 NCPEA Yearbook and national conference is “best practices”. The following chapters and conference presentations hold valuable information and insight into preparing competent educational leaders. The challenge presented in this chapter is whether our programs can prepare leaders to study, analyze, recommend, implement, and evaluate changes to the *school system*. It is in the system that one finds the root causes and correct place to lay blame. It is in the system where change must occur. Efforts toward improvements to the system should not only guide our teaching, but our research and service.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides examples of core changes necessary for systemic transformation. Many of the following recommendations have already been tried and discarded, because the system itself opposed the individual changes. There is not one simple answer, but the premise here is that answers must be found where a *whole system* is designed in a manner that supports needed change.

[1] Change the system where all instruction is at the challenge level.

Vygotsky was correct to say that greater learning occurs when instruction is in the zone of proximal dif-

ference or challenge level. The old model of one teacher at the front of the room presenting in one style to thirty students—some of whom are lost, others are bored, and still others are struggling to process new knowledge—does not address the need to have all instruction at the challenge level for all students. Many designs better meet this need and further research, study, and practice must be collaboratively undertaken by scholars, practitioners, and graduate students.

- [2] Change the system where students take examinations when they are ready and given adequate time to display their knowledge and skill.

Periodic timed tests are a product of the old rating, ranking, and weeding out system thinking. They serve that purpose well but contradict what brain research and common sense dictate. This practice produces fear, assures gaps in learning, and lowers the self-esteem of many struggling students. Self-pacing must be incorporated into the system with advances in assessments for learning versus assessments for ranking.

- [3] Change the focus of the current system from mastering basic skills to advanced study in students' gifts and interests.

A society needs masters in every field. Producing a generation of graduates of basic skills results in current CEOs from companies such as Microsoft, Intel, and Motorola apologizing to citizens that they are forced to hire students from other countries where they claim math and science programs are more rigorous. Our students deserve rigor and relevance and are motivated when learning mirrors their unique interests and natural abilities. The system must provide the flexibility and utilize differing technologies in order to meet the needs of our students with varied gifts and interests.

- [4] Change the system practice of awarding A, B, C, D, or F to elementary students (or at the very least, primary students) and adopt a system for mastery learning and grading.

Our very young students form many deep-seated beliefs about their world and especially themselves. Again, A-F is a practice rooted in ranking and weeding out and causes great harm to all those receiving less than A. These students believe they are less than the A students and/or inferior in math or spelling, for example. Without some form of self-pacing and strategies for achieving mastery, schools ensure gaps in learning for all except the A students. Grades serve as harmful labeling, decrease motivation, and retard the entire system with continuance of greater disparities of ability in future classes and grades. The system must nurture our very young and guarantee mastery and success in these very formative years of their education.

- [5] Change the system mentality of adults being solely responsible for academic and social learning to sharing responsibility with students.

In most countries if a student fails to meet academic or social expectations, the student and family are embarrassed and held responsible. In the U.S., the teacher and principal are held accountable. It is this sense of adult control in our country's public schools that often separate teachers/administrators and students into opposing sides versus working together for the continued development and learning for the student. Leadership can begin at an early age and the system needs to incorporate practices and policies that support and require student responsibility.

- [6] Change university preparation, staff development, and supervision of teaching to expertise in learning.

Teachers will never gain the respect they deserve if they continue to be generic teachers only. Most people teach others in some regard and thus, do not see teaching as a unique and professional exercise. Besides, what other profession can hire substitutes from the citizenry to take their place? The school system should be staffed with professionals capable of diagnosing learning and social developmental needs. These experts can then prescribe specific instructional treatments for any particular need or concern. Careers for professional educators should be a continual search for newer and better ways to increase learning. The system should advance accordingly.

- [7] Change the principal's job description from sole instructional leader to instructional team leader.

Any forward thinking system will have procedures in place for the development of prospective leaders to work with the leader and eventually replace the retiring leader. Master teachers with the potential for leadership in administration should be groomed in leadership along with departmental and grade-level chairs and other teacher leaders wishing to remain in the classroom. The public education system should

foster collaboration between school, district, and state leaders for giving, sharing, and learning from each other.

- [8] Change the system's greater proportion of training to a greater emphasis and effort in educating.

If one accepts the definition of training as preparation for more school and educating as preparation for life, the higher percentage of instruction in public schools should be on educating. A foreign exchange student from Germany once reported that homework in America differed greatly from assignments in her homeland. "In America, the teachers want to know whether you read the material or completed the class activity. In Germany, they make you think and apply to real life." The curriculum should be assessed in terms of training versus educating and efforts made to implement the appropriate balance.

- [9] Change from practices grounded in behavioral psychology to cognitive objectives and strategies.

For education and learning, behavioral psychology died several decades ago! Yet, numerous practices aligned with a behavioral perspective remain alive and a tradition in public education. Some universities and many school leaders still teach and expect behavioral objectives for classroom instruction. The system must move to cognitive objectives and strategies if we are to reach all students and ensure effective and efficient learning processes are developed in our students. Schools should be about learning and only a cognitive perspective allows us to understand and develop learning.

- [10] Change to a system with no punishments.

The design of a better educational system should remove all existing fear. For the most part, fear in schools today include fear of making mistakes, fear of bullying, fear of not fitting in, and fear of punishment. The traditional school system separates academic learning from social learning. Although this makes little sense to researchers in brain theory, the tradition of using problem solving for academic learning and punishments for social learning remain. Logic would require that schools take strong measures with crimes committed, but most social mistakes should be treated with the same interventions as mistakes in academic learning. Problem solving with real life problems transfers much easier to academics than the reverse. Punishing and fear have no place in tomorrow's school system.

- [11] Change the traditional system where students interact with few students of their own culture to a system where students experience students of many cultures.

In many traditional school classrooms students sit in one seat for the entire year and get to truly know very few other students. These few are typically good friends of similar background and interest. The opportunity to better know and understand others of differing religion, race, culture, and economic status is often lost for a lifetime. This passive learning environment not only impedes knowledge of others but is inferior to an active learning environment. A better system would create numerous group and field activities where increased interaction with others is required.

- [12] Change the traditional system of treating secondary students as children.

Expectations and privileges in secondary schools differ only slightly from those in elementary schools. Low expectations for social and academic progress yield low levels of development. Adult learning strategies along with adult expectations are needed in a new secondary system of educating young adults.

- [13] Change the system of a typical six-period day to a 10-period day.

Students are unique and each has special needs and gifts. The traditional school day offers few electives or supplemental instruction in areas of need or interest. In most countries of the world, students have ten-period days and typically take two sciences and two from other required basic areas along with an array of electives. Although this has a significant impact on scheduling and teacher workload, it is one way to provide for unique needs and interests of our students.

- [14] Change the system to not allow either social promotion or retention.

The traditional system of grade levels is another product of ranking and weeding out belief. New designs where students advance according to progress and mastery need to be researched. Both social promotion and retention alternatives have so many negative side effects that only in rare instances is either successful. With a system of cooperative learning, mastery learning, additional classes for those in need, self-pacing, ability to re-test and catch up—neither of these practices would be needed.

- [15] Change the isolated state, district, and individual school systems to a national collaborative system in areas of program, curriculum, and knowledge creation.

In many countries scholars, practitioners, government officials, and business and industry leaders work together in developing curriculum, assessments, and school policies and procedures. In the U.S., each of the 15,000 school districts is basically on their own to develop curriculum, instructional strategy, and assessment—with the exception of seriously detrimental high-stakes state tests. Little sharing or collaboration occur and most often, districts do not have trained experts in these fields. While states and districts will surely keep autonomy, a system of information sharing and collaborative efforts to address concerns and new learning needs to be designed.

[16] Change from legislative standards to professional goals.

Control of the public school system is vested in elected or appointed officials with little or no formal education or expertise in learning, instruction, assessment, curriculum, psychology, sociology, and a host of other knowledge bases used in public education.

Standards corrupt and can be used only for training skills, while goals developed by an education profession consider unique abilities and interests of students and how to maximize their potential. Decisions affecting public schools are often based solely on advice from political and business think-tanks versus professional educators. A highly collaborative education profession with all rights and responsibilities must be established much like the professions of law, medicine, and numerous others.

As previously stated, this list is not exhaustive. These may be answers to many concerns but certainly not *the* answers. New and proven methods are tried, yet fail due to a 350-year old system that cannot support isolated change. Preparing school leaders to manage the old traditional system will do little to stifle the blame game. The system is to blame! The challenge ahead for preparation of new school leaders is whether we can prepare leaders with the skill and desire to research, implement, and assess changes on a *systemic* level.

Key concepts were derived from the excellent work by:

Duffy, F.M. (2006). *Power, politics, and ethics in school districts: Dynamic leadership for systemic change*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.

Gage, N.L. & Berliner, D.C. *Educational psychology*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Hoyle, J.R. (2005). The standards movements in educational administration: A quest for respect. In T. Creighton, S. Harris & J. Coleman (Eds.), *Crediting the past, challenging the present, creating the future*. National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

Posner, G. (2004). *Analyzing the curriculum*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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*Best wishes for the coming year and may you experience exceptional learning,
heartfelt love, and joyous laughter.*

Expanding the Knowledge Base: Socially Just Theory in Educational Leadership Programs*

Genevieve Brown and Beverly J. Irby

Increasingly, faculty members in educational administration programs are focusing on preparing school leaders to foster social justice in diverse schools. Leadership programs have an obligation, according to Lopez (2003), to equip school leaders to successfully lead diverse organizations. As Marshall and Oliva (2006) stated, “. . . educational leaders are the people who must deliver some version of social justice and equity” (p.1).

At the same time faculty are addressing leadership for social justice, they also are examining and defining the educational leadership knowledge base. According to Creighton, Busch, McNeal, and Waxman (2005), the knowledge base in educational leadership is currently incomplete, unorganized, and may lack relevancy and applicability for practicing school leaders. We add that such a knowledge base is inadequate as a conceptual foundation for understanding and informing practice in organizations, as well as for advancing social justice.

The knowledge base being examined and defined is not socially just, as it is predicated on prevalent leadership theories that are not socially just. These theories that should be guiding actions of all leaders have been criticized, particularly because they have been based primarily on leadership actions and attributes limited exclusively to White males (Hoyle, 2006; Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002; Shakeshaft, 1985; Skrla, Reyes, & Shuerich, 2000).

In contrast, social justice is linked to the concepts of inclusion, equity, and fairness. Like other abstract concepts, the exact meaning of social justice can be interpreted from a variety of perspectives. One explanation of social justice was offered by McKerrow and Shockley-Lee (2005):

Social justice is defined not only by what it is but also by what it is not, namely injustice. By seeking justice, we anticipate the ideal. By questioning injustice we approach it. Integrating both, we achieve it. It is one thing to agree that discrimination is wrong. That is the easy part. It is another to make a conscious choice to confront the discrimination that emerges from everyday interactions in organizations and communities. That brings out another element of social justice—the necessity of courage. And so, it seems that social justice requires interactions among a well-developed theoretical /historical viewpoint, a penchant for activism, the choice to meld the two and the courage to do it.

Relating social justice specifically to education, Theoharis (2004) focused his definition on the campus principal, describing social justice leaders as principals who:

advocate, lead and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions....Because of its emphasis on addressing and eliminating marginalization, inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, English language learners, and other students traditionally segregated in schools are also necessitated by this definition. (p.36)

*The Cocking Lecture, July, 2005 delivered by Dr. Genevieve Brown, is the basis for this chapter.

Emphasizing outcomes of social justice leadership in schools rather than an explicit definition of the term, Brown, Irby, and Lara-Alecio (2004) indicated that the practice of social justice leadership promotes:

1. democracy in schooling
2. equitable practices in schools
3. equal treatment in social, economic, and political arenas
4. removal of racial, linguistic, gender, and class-based barriers
5. academic excellence for all children
6. elimination of hostile environments
7. equal power relationships
8. opportunities and resources for career advancement
9. choice to the marginalized or the oppressed
10. changes in attitudes, thoughts, and action. (p. 9)

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, GENDER, AND THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Since 1985, educational leadership programs have been criticized (a) for a knowledge base that is biased, inadequate, and excludes experiences of women administrators (Shakeshaft, 1985; Brown & Irby, 2003; Skrla, Reyes, & Scheurich, 2000), (b) for doing little to address the needs of women leaders (Irby & Brown, 2000; Logan, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1985), (c) for relying largely on a male-dominated discourse (Grogan, 1996), (d) for preparation programs less relevant to females than to their male counterparts (Iselt, Brown, & Irby, 2001) even though females outnumber males in the programs (Brunner, 2000), (e) for viewing women through traditional theoretical lenses (Grogan, 1996), and (f) for measuring women against ideals that have historically served men best (Grogan, 1996).

Underscoring the criticisms of gender equity in leadership preparation programs is the concern that theories taught in leadership preparation programs are problematic with regard to gender equity and, thus, to social justice. For example, most studies related to the theories were sponsored by male-dominated agencies; further, theories traditionally included samples limited to males in corporate and military environments as well as sexist language. Trautman (2000) pointed out that these theories imply that females are expected to behave like men. She also discovered that while these theories opposed paternalism as a leadership style, they affirmed masculine descriptions of leaders. Women are frequently perceived negatively if they do not adopt a masculine leadership style.

This indirect discrimination not only hinders social justice, but also inhibits diversity and perpetuates barriers faced by women in educational administration (Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002). According to Young and McLeod (2001), “Exposing our students solely to traditional leadership literature [including leadership theories] essentially legitimizes traditionally male perspectives and delegitimizes the behavior and perspectives of women” (p. 491). Irby et al. (2002) stated that “male-based leadership theories advanced in coursework, texts, and discussions, perpetuate barriers that women leaders encounter” (p. 306) and promote stereotypical norms for organizations.

Brown and Irby (1995) indicated that “the current theories taught in administrative preparation programs are negatively impacting the field because they (a) do not reflect currently advocated leadership practice [or organizational paradigms]; (b) do not address the concerns, needs, or realities of women; (c) perpetuate the barriers that women encounter; and (d) do not prepare women or men to create and work effectively in inclusive systems” (p. 42–43), (e) assume that male experiences can be generalized to explain all human behavior, and (f) are not applicable to all students and are especially irrelevant to females.

In 1995, Brown and Irby echoed a 1984 challenge to leadership theory issued by Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984) and “averred that true reform in administrative preparation programs will not occur unless current theory is reevaluated and reevaluated. The term ‘reevaluated,’ deals with the technical examination of the subject; while the term, ‘revaluated,’ refers to an examination of deep, personal value systems” (Brown & Irby, 1995, p. 41).

Grogan (1999) specified that new conceptions of leadership theories are needed because current leadership

theories have contributed to inequities. She stated, “It is reasonable to imagine that because women’s lived experiences as leaders are different from men’s, new theoretical understanding of a leadership that is premised on social justice might emerge” (p.533). McCarthy (1999) avowed that educational administration programs have focused the study of leadership on traditional theories and understandings of how school should be led. The ways in which such programs are taught are not considerate of female administrators.

Over the past two decades, several considerations of leadership concepts, philosophies, or theories have emerged, some that consciously included the perspectives of females, some that did not. Table 1 denotes most of the leadership styles, leadership/or organizational concepts, philosophies, or theories that have emerged since the early 1980’s that do include characteristics ascribed to female leaders. It must be noted that although several theories have surfaced, only one, The Synergistic Leadership Theory (Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002), openly acknowledges that it was developed intentionally inclusive of the female voice and experiences, as well as the feminist organization.

EXPANDING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE RELATED TO THEORY

Expanding the knowledge base to include gender-inclusive theory will assist us to: (a) promote social justice; (b) reflect currently advocated leadership practice; (c) address the concerns, needs, and realities of women; (d) reduce the barriers women encounter; and (e) prepare women and men to create and work effectively in inclusive systems.

The Synergistic Leadership Theory (SLT) developed by Irby, Brown, Duffy, and Trautman (2002) is socially just, gender inclusive, and relevant to both male and female leaders. The theory is based on four equal factors: (a) attitudes, beliefs, and values; (b) leadership behaviors, (c) external forces, and (d) organizational structure. Each factor is equal; no structural hierarchy exists, and each factor interacts with the others. The model is depicted as a tetrahedron with six interactive pairs in Figure 1.

In the SLT, *attitudes, beliefs, and values* are the foundation for guiding principals that “apply at all times in all places” (Covey, 1992) and are manifested in actions, such as valuing professional growth, being open to change, and valuing diversity and integrity. *Leadership behavior* is depicted as a range of behaviors from autocratic to nurturer. *External forces* are those influencers outside the control of the organization or the leader that interact with the organization and the leader and that inherently embody a set of values, attitudes and beliefs. They may

The Tetrahedral Model of the Synergistic Leadership Theory

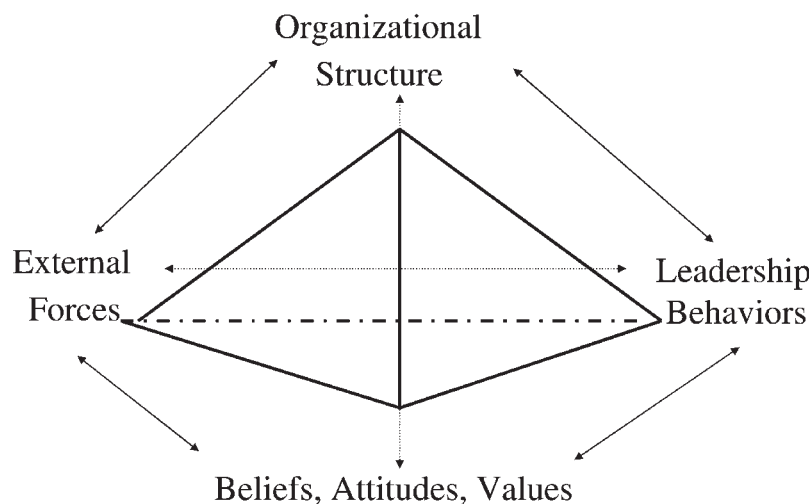


Figure 1. The tetrahedral model for the synergistic leadership theory.

include: (a) local, national, and international community and conditions, (b) governmental regulations, laws, (c) demographics, (d) cultural and political climate, (e) technological advances, (f) economic situations, and (g) policy-making board decisions. *Organizational structure* refers to the characteristics of organizations and how they operate. For example, bureaucratic organizations are characterized by division of labor, rules, hierarchy of authority, impersonality, competence; while feminist organizations feature participative decision making, systems of rotating leadership, promotion of community and cooperation, and power sharing.

The SLT creates a framework for describing interactions and dynamic tensions among the four factors of the Theory, *leadership behaviors, organizational structures, external forces, and attitudes and beliefs*, with focus on the interconnectedness of the four factors. Tension between even two of the factors can negatively impact the perceived effectiveness of the leader or organization.

The SLT differs from current leadership theories in that female leaders were included in its development. Further, the SLT acknowledges a range of behaviors and organizational structures inclusive of those considered “feminine.” Additionally, it acknowledges that (a) female and male leaders may be impacted by external forces, organizational structures, beliefs, attitudes, and values in different ways; (b) female leadership behaviors may interact with the factors in ways unlike leadership behaviors of males; and (c) leaders at various positions or levels, i.e. teacher leaders to superintendents, may be impacted by the factors of the Theory in different ways.

The SLT assists leaders in understanding both political and cultural environments, in decision making and in determining why (or why not) a leader is perceived as successful. Further, it assists in determining an administrative candidate’s congruence with cultural and political environments within a particular organization while fostering reflective practice.

Applying the SLT during self-assessment, leaders construct or reconstruct themselves and their professional worlds. Through the analysis of the interactions of the four factors, leaders learn much about themselves, their constituents, and their organizations. Specifically, they are able to analyze or consider their leadership behavior, the organizational structure, the beliefs, attitudes, and values, and the external forces as they impact social justice (Brown, Irby, & Lara, 2004).

VALIDATION STUDIES

The SLT, a gender-inclusive theory, has been validated among various levels of school leaders, both male and females, and across American ethnic cultures and geographic locations as well as internationally (Bamburg, 2004; Hernandez, 2004; Holtkamp, 2001; Trautman, 2000; Truslow, 2004; Schlosberg, 2003). Determined to be a useful tool for understanding leadership practices and educational organizations, the SLT is systemic, contextual, relational and contingent, exemplifying contemporary leadership practices (Schlosberg, 2003). The SLT is accompanied by The Organizational and Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (OLEI), a 96-item instrument designed to measure agreement or disagreement with particular indicators of each of the four factors of the SLT. The OLEI has been validated in research conducted by Holtkamp (2001), Hernandez (2004), and Trautman (2000).

Research has indicated that the SLT fulfills the expectations of a sound theory and is viable for practicing and future leaders (Bamburg, 2004). Studies have determined that the SLT is parsimonious (i.e., simply integrates a large number of variables) (Holtkamp, 2001) and practical in understanding interactive systems (Trautman, 2000). Further, the SLT possesses explanatory power and generalizability across a range of positions and by gender (Trautman, 2000), and thus, promotes dialogue around a model that is cognizant of female, as well as male, realities (Trautman, 2000; Truslow, 2001). The four factors of the SLT provide a current theoretical framework from which to examine the perceptions of superintendents and school boards (Hernandez, 2004), facilitating a deeper understanding of the context of the superintendency and the superintendent—school board relationship, as well as identifying potential sources of conflict between the superintendent and school board (Hernandez, 2004).

A post-modernist theory, the SLT does not advocate a binary “either/or” criteria for the existence of new theories over old, but merely a co-existence or continuity of theories; its purpose is not to replace the old but to expand the knowledge base in educational leadership theory. It adds to existing leadership theories in the following ways: (a) includes a theory that addresses gender, cultural, and political issues, (b) reflects a theory inclusive of females’ leadership experiences, (c) applies to both men and women leaders, (d) enhances relevancy of

theory presented in leadership programs for both females and males, and (e) directly promotes equity and social justice.

CONCLUSION

As we build and expand the knowledge base in educational leadership, social justice related to theory cannot be ignored. Theory, the very foundation of information from which models and approaches to leadership emerge, is the pivotal point which focuses leadership actions, in any direction, whether positive or negative.

We must not limit reform efforts in the knowledge base by merely addressing the charges of “too much theory” or of the lack of integration, relevancy and practice. Nor must we merely continue to examine and teach the theories currently existing in the knowledge base. We must advance new theory founded in social justice that is critical for guiding leadership actions necessary to attaining the goal of socially just schools and organizations.

Table 1. Leadership/Organizational Concepts, Styles, Philosophies, and Theories Embracing Female Leadership Behaviors Emerging Since 1985.

Concepts, Styles, or Philosophies	Theories
Interactive Leadership (Leadership Style) (Rosener, 1990)	Synergistic Leadership Theory (Systems and Postmodern Theory— developed purposefully to include the female voice and experience) (Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002)
Feminist Leadership (Leadership Style) (Tong, 1989; McCall, 1995; Morgen, 1994)	Systems Theory (Organizational Theory— no specific mention of females, but schools are viewed as learning organizations) (Senge, 1990)
Power to (Leadership Style) (Brunner & Duncan, 1998)	Constructivist Leadership (Leadership Theory— embraces some female leadership behaviors, but not developed specifically to include female leadership perspective) (Lambert, 1995)
Power with (Leadership Style) (Brunner, 1999)	Organization Framework (Organizational Theory—embraces some feminist organizational characteristics, but was not developed specifically to be a feminist organizational theory) (Bolman & Deal, 1991)
Caring Leadership (Leadership Style) (Grogan, 1998; Noddings, 1984)	
Value-added Leadership (Leadership Style) (Covey, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1994)	
Authentic Leadership (Leadership Style) (Sergiovanni, 1991)	
Relational Leadership (Leadership Style) (Reagan, 1990; Reagan & Brooks, 1995)	
Learning-focused Leadership (Leadership Style) (Beck & Murphy, 1996)	
Moral Leadership (Leadership Style) (Sergiovanni, 1992)	
Servant Leadership (Leadership Style) (Sergiovanni, 1992; Schlosberg, 2003)	
Educative Leadership (Leadership Philosophy or Concept) (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Starratt, 1984)	

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Part-Time Faculty and Distance Education: Quandaries in Educational Administration's Swamp

Theodore J. Kowalski

Noted scholar, Donald Schön (1987), used a topographical analogy to describe the nature of problems common in professions. Dividing the context of practice into high ground and lowland, he characterized the former as dry and serene—territory where practitioners routinely attend to problems that lend themselves to research-based theory and techniques. He characterized the latter as swampy and unsettling—territory where practitioners encounter messy and confusing problems that defy textbook solutions. Schön then argued that most professionals prefer to remain high and dry even though they acknowledge that the most significant quandaries requiring their expertise are mired in the swamp. In the contemporary context of educational administration, the increasing dependency on part-time faculty and the proliferation of distance education (DE) courses arguably are insidious lowland dilemmas. Though professors recognize the dark side of these actions and may even criticize them publicly, most have been unwilling to descend into the lowland so that they can deal with them appropriately (Kowalski, 2004).

This chapter explores the promises and pitfalls associated with employing practitioners as part-time instructors and using DE as an instructional medium that makes pre-service and in-service professional education more accessible. The content is shaped by four assumptions:

1. Despite claims to the contrary, decisions to increase the number of part-time faculty and to offer DE degrees and courses have been influenced primarily by economic and managerial motives.
2. At least for the foreseeable future, the trends to increase part-time faculty and DE courses will accelerate.
3. Though practitioner involvement and DE can benefit professional preparation, to date their effects have been mostly negative, largely because they have not been treated as reform initiatives.
4. Unless educational administration professors assume an active leadership role in determining what should be done to maximize the potential of practitioner involvement and DE, the quality of professional preparation will continue to deteriorate and the profession's credibility may suffer irreparable damage.

Given these suppositions, the challenge facing the profession is not eliminating part-time faculty and DE but rather it is developing a knowledge base that facilitates their effective and ethical deployment.

Discussion of these two topics begins with an overview of institutional motives; the intent is to demonstrate the considerable differences between economic and managerial purposes and professional and pedagogical purposes. Next, common deployment pitfalls are identified to depict the myriad negative consequences that already have occurred at many universities. Last, recommendations regarding “best practices” are made to shape policy so that promises of practitioner involvement and DE can become authentic reforms improving both administrator preparation and practice.

INSTITUTIONAL MOTIVES

The employment of part-time instructors has long been a contentious issue in higher education generally and

in educational administration specifically (Kowalski, 2005b). For example, many regular faculty members believe that university administrators employ increasing numbers of part-time instructors solely to reduce operating costs and risk associated with staffing decisions (e.g., not knowing how enrollment trends will affect the need for faculty). More recently, university administrators have viewed DE as another “cash cow”; that is, they believe such courses could be delivered “to a large number of paying customers without the expense of providing things such as temperature controlled classrooms and parking spaces” ((Brown & Green, 2003, p. 149). A more balanced analysis of both part-time instructors and DE, however, reveals that there are reasoned arguments supporting these two actions, especially in professions such as educational administration. Motives are discussed separately for each issue.

Part-Time Instructors

Just a few decades ago, many faculty members still thought that “the American academy provided refuge from most vicissitudes of the market economy” (Margolis, 2000, p. 9). But in the aftermath of the 1960s, an egalitarian philosophy and influx of post World War II baby boomers created immense economic and political pressures for higher education institutions. Gradually universities were transformed from collegial to corporate enterprises (Margolis, 2000) and in the aftermath, university administrators began justifying societal support by emphasizing the economic benefits higher education produced for individuals and the nation (Bok, 1993). Within this economic perspective, students turned into customers (Sykes, 1988), and the culture of higher education changed considerably.

With specific reference to part-time faculty, general explanations for increasing this category of employees have ranged from reducing enrollment instability risks to managing budget reductions to improving program quality (Beem, 2002; Fogg, 2001). Pressures to employ part-time faculty appear to have been greatest in undergraduate departments in which deans and chairs have had limited access to external resources and below average internal funding. Indeed, documented abuses of part-time faculty have occurred most frequently in undergraduate departments offering general education courses (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Employment trends have been especially revealing. Between 1993 and 1998, for example, 40% of the colleges and universities reported cutting the number of full-time faculty positions—and most of these institutions also reported a corresponding increase in the number of part-time instructors (Fogg, 2001). During the 1990s, approximately 42% of all college faculty were employed part-time or in non-tenure eligible positions (Wilson, 2001); more notable, this figure was projected to increase to 55% by the year 2010 (Schuster, 1998). Fulton (2000) argues that the explanation for shifting from full-time to part-time faculty has been and remains inexpensive labor; that is, institutional costs for part-time instructors are comparatively small both because part-time instructors receive very low salaries and very few receive fringe benefits (Cox, 2000).

In educational administration, the employment of part-time instructors often has been cast as a program improvement initiative; that is, the inclusion of practitioners was described as a measure that would bridge theoretical and craft knowledge (Kowalski, 2005b). Given the criticisms of school administrator preparation over the past 30 years, the need for such a nexus was axiomatic. The literature abounded with alleged shortcomings that ranged from abysmal admission, retention, and graduation standards (e.g., Clark, 1989) to overly theoretical and insufficiently practical program requirements (e.g., Goldman & Kempner, 1988; Maher, 1988). Responding to these problems, two reform groups, The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA, 1987) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 1989), recommended major revisions to professional preparation but most of their suggestions fell on deaf ears (Björk, Kowalski, & Young, 2006).

By the early 1990s, deans and department chairs were confronted with both efficiency demands and program quality concerns (Kowalski, 2002). As they considered alternatives for mollifying their critics, they had to deal with three harsh realities.

1. Historically, educational administration departments have resisted reform (McCarthy, 1999b); therefore, there was little reason to believe that professors would initiate and sustain major changes voluntarily.
2. Historically, quantity rather than quality had guided student admission decisions. Average scores for school administration students on the Graduate Record Examination were not only lower than those for students in

other disciplines, they were lower than those for students with other education majors (Keedy & Grandy, 2001).

3. Rather than mounting a concerted effort to eliminate or improve poorly-staffed, under-funded, and ineffective preparation programs, most school administration professors remained passive, convinced that critics would eventually turn their attention to other issues (Kowalski, 2004).

In this political environment, the deployment of practitioners as part-time instructors became a highly attractive “win-win” choice. Personnel costs and managerial risk could be lowered and since the part-time instructors would be practitioners, the action could be presented to the public as a reform initiative.

Within the profession, the inclusion of practitioners in professional preparation was widely supported, especially by organizations such as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The action was viewed as an effective way to increase the quantity and quality of clinical education (e.g., Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001; Jackson, 2001) and to make instruction more relevant to practice (e.g., Hart, 1999; Kowalski, 2005a). Undeniably, practitioner involvement facilitates these objectives. In truth, however, past deployment decisions offer little evidence that the objectives have been met. At many institutions, the employment of part-time instructors merely diverted attention away from more needed but unattractive structural improvements, such as raising admission standards, adopting stringent accreditation criteria, and providing quality clinical experiences. Improvement decisions such as these obviously would have been more politically contentious and economically difficult (Kowalski, 2004).

In summary, the involvement of practitioners in preparation has been and remains a potentially powerful reform. Skeptics argue, however, that this action merely has provided a convenient façade that obfuscates economic and managerial motives. For example, Arthur Wise, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, asserted that economic efficiency (e.g., lowering faculty costs) and managerial accommodations (e.g., reducing uncertainty about staffing needs) continue to be primary reasons for employing part-time faculty in schools of education (Beem, 2002).

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Saying that DE has increased at a rapid rate is an understatement. A National Center for Education Statistics study, for instance, reported that the percentage of post-secondary institutions using asynchronous Internet technologies for their DE offerings nearly tripled (from 22% to 60%) between 1995 and 1998 (Lewis, Snow, Farris, Levin, & Greene 1999). More recently, a study in Illinois reported that online enrollment in higher education in that state increased 54% from 2001–02 to 2002–03 (Jorgensen, 2004). It is estimated that approximately 90% of all colleges now offer some form of DE (Levinson, 2005). This proliferation, however, has occurred in an environment characterized by myths and skepticism; for example, important institutional decisions about DE have often been based on unfounded hypotheses—such as believing that “shifting from bricks to clicks will transform learning” (Sherry, 2005, p. 374). In addition, online courses unquestionably have and continue to make many professors uncomfortable.

The reasons why regular faculty members feel uneasy about DE are many and varied; the following are among the most notable causes.

Philosophically, many faculty members are convinced that DE is an ineffective or unethical alternative to providing a college education—especially for traditional-aged students (O’Quinn & Corry, 2002).

Many regular faculty members believe that this instructional strategy is vulnerable to externally set agendas (e.g., legislative efforts to reduce funding to higher education (Calvert, 2005).

Many regular faculty members resist DE simply because they have an aversion to change (Berge, 1998; Parisot, 1997).

Many regular faculty members are not comfortable using technology (Parisot, 1997).

Concerns about job security (e.g., suspicions that DE is intended to reduce personnel costs) have prompted many regular faculty members to oppose DE (Maguire, 2005; McLean, 2005).

In the case of educational administration, critics (e.g., Fusarelli, 2004) also have argued that the development

of educational leaders is fundamentally and irrevocably an interpersonal, relational process that cannot take place via a disembodied, depersonalized delivery system.

Regardless of why they oppose DE, detractors generally agree that higher education officials have been guided primarily by economic motives—a conviction that has some empirical support (Lorenzetti, 2004). Navarro (2000) argues that there is at least a widespread perception that college administrators were adopting this medium more for “economic reasons than educational purposes” (p. 283). Offering a somewhat different view, Romiszowski (2005) suggests that regardless of original intent, the greater availability and decreasing costs of technological infrastructures has resulted in economics becoming a driving force.

Once in place, online courses and degrees remove most time and place boundaries of the traditional campus and as a result, market competition for students intensifies transforming higher education into a capitalistic enterprise (Margolis, 2000). Students now have multiple options to take on-line courses from universities across the world or from a growing number of for-profit institutions (Romiszowski 2005), some even offering PhDs and professional degrees (e.g., law or physical therapy). Clearly then, a connection between DE and economics is obvious. Recognizing this fact, detractors have attempted to show that only ineffective DE is economically advantageous. For example, the National Education Association contends that DE, if deployed properly, is actually more expensive than face-to-face instruction (Carr, 2001).

Despite considerable cynicism, not all college instructors oppose DE. Some analysts (e.g., Barley, 1999) note that the delivery system responds to pragmatic needs stemming from the changing nature of work and other realities of a global economy. Proponents add that the instructional mode provides philosophical and pedagogical advantages over traditional courses (Altbach, 1992). Consider the following examples supporting such claims:

Learning opportunities are created for many students who otherwise would not attend college, primarily because they do not have easy access to a college campus or they do not have sufficient resources to reside on campus (Lamb & Smith, 1999).

Normative age standards for attending college are eradicated, thus encouraging adults to take courses or to pursue degrees (Sikora, 2002).

The instructional paradigm is well suited to meet the needs of many graduate and continuing education students as evidenced by a myriad of successful partnerships between universities and professional-intense organizations (e.g., school districts, hospitals, and accounting firms [Leonard, 2000]).

Unlike face-to-face courses where a few prepared students tend to dominate discussions with the instruction, DE requires all students and the instructor to exchange information (Lamb, 2005).

Advocates for DE are even found in educational administration. James Morrison (2005) wrote the following about his personal experience teaching a DE course at the University of North Carolina:

I changed my role as teacher from actor to director and demanded a corresponding transition in student behavior that countered prevailing norms. Several of my colleagues were upset because I deviated from a paradigm that regarded educational administration/leadership as a field of defined knowledge that is taught to students, usually sequentially. My constructivist approach focused on process, not defined knowledge . . . Therefore, student papers—not my lectures—constituted the “content” of the course. (p. 254)

A considerable volume of research has been conducted on DE with much of it focused on comparisons studies (i.e., studies measuring DE in relation to face-to-face courses) and generally, academics have accepted a “no significant difference” conclusion (Tucker, 2001). This judgment, however, stems primarily from two types of analyses: studies finding no significant differences and meta-analysis (Zhao, Lei, Chun Lai, & Tan, 2005). In actuality, research results on comparability have been mixed. Thus, comparability findings, even for graduate courses in business (e.g., Dean, Biner, & Summers, 1996; Kretovics & McCambridge, 2002) and in education (e.g., Steinweg, Davis, & Thomson, 2005) need to be considered in light of literature reporting negative effects in DE courses (e.g., Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2004; McIsaac & Gunawardena, 1996). Overall, the quality, rigor, and timing of DE research have varied considerably (Zhao et al., 2005). For example, studies conducted prior to 1998 generally report findings less favorable to DE than those conducted in subsequent years (Machtmes & Asher, 2000).

SYNTHESIS

In summary, many professors believe that choices made by university officials with respect to employing part-time faculty and to adopting DE are determined by economics and managerial safety and not philosophy or pedagogy. More precisely, they see staffing and instructional delivery decisions being shaped by two demands: *pressures to increase operational efficiency* (e.g., generating more credit hours without increasing expenditures or decreasing expenditures while maintaining present credit hour levels) and *pressures to treat students as customers rather than as clients*. Equally notable, their convictions on these two issues are in accord with the broader reality that the modern university has become a capitalistic enterprise.

As noted previously, however, proponents have countered condemnations by presenting reasoned philosophical and pedagogical arguments for practitioner involvement and DE. Especially in the context of professional schools, a fair and balanced analysis suggests that the consequences of decisions to deploy these two tactics are not predestined. Stated differently, the value of part-time faculty and DE—professionally, pedagogically, and even economically—depend on deployment decisions and not the nature of the initiatives. In the context of growing market competition among universities, therefore, the real challenge facing educational administration professors is not whether to involve practitioners and to use DE but rather what should be done to ensure that these actions actually improve programming.

COMMON PITFALLS

Concerns about purely economic motives relate to possible abuses that occur if part-time instructors and DE are deployed incorrectly. In institutions where university administrators make poor choices, these strategies actually can reduce program quality and present additional barriers to needed reform. Consequently, identifying common errors serves to raise awareness and provide a context for developing effective policy that prevents them from occurring.

PART-TIME INSTRUCTORS

Notwithstanding the growing presence of part-time instructors in school administration preparation programs (Shakeshaft, 2002), the effects of this personnel strategy are largely unknown. In large measure, lack of knowledge stems from the difficulty of acquiring accurate data across institutions that exhibit inconsistent recruiting, hiring, orientation, and enculturation practices (Reid, 1996). Even so, literally hundreds of articles, books, and position papers have been written about part-time instructors, many of them focusing on employer and employee abusive behavior (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). The literature pertaining to adjunct faculty has been especially negative, with terms like *exploitation* (e.g., National Education Association, 1988) and gross injustice (e.g., Twigg, 1989) used copiously. The applicability of most of this literature, though, is questionable, primarily because conditions in educational administration departments are atypical. For example, many part-time faculty in other disciplines do not have doctoral degrees (Avakian, 1995) whereas virtually all in school administration possess this credential (AASA, 2002); many adjunct faculty across the academy are totally or largely reliant on income derived from teaching (Conley & Leslie, 2002) but most part-time school administration instructors are either full-time practitioners or full-pension retired practitioners (AASA, 2002). Other notable differences include age and gender; compared to the entire population of adjunct faculty, part-time instructors in school administration are older and predominately men (AASA, 2002).

As noted earlier, there has been an inverse linear association between the quantity of part-time and the quantity of full-time faculty; as the former has increased, the latter has decreased. This connection may partially explain why 40% of all school administration programs in the late 1990s employed fewer than five full-time faculty members (McCarthy, 1999a). The drift toward a mix of fewer full-time and more part-time professors is troubling for at least four reasons.

1. Having most courses and clinical experiences staffed by part-time instructors, regardless of the discipline, substantially increases the potential that student educational experiences will be mediocre (Simpson, 1991).

2. The likelihood that course content will be inconsistent increases if part-time instructors are not given and required to follow a prescribed syllabus. A lack of horizontal curriculum coordination then affects vertical curriculum coordination causing students to have uneven academic experiences.
3. Full-time professors are forced to spend an inordinate amount of their time on responsibilities other than teaching and scholarship (Shakeshaft, 2002). For example, they may have to assume unusually high advising loads and serve on a myriad of department, college, and university committees.
4. As departments diminish in size, they become politically vulnerable; that is, they often are forced to merge with one or more other departments. In this context, competition related to securing necessary resources and policy almost always becomes more intense.

The development and severity of possible problems related to part-time instructors depends on a mix of employer and employee decisions. The following errors are among the most common committed by employing officials.

Part-time instructors often are not provided job descriptions and specific expectations (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Yet, role ambiguity is known to reduce job performance, job satisfaction, and employee commitment (Monroe & Denman, 1991). When part-time instructors are uncertain about their role and responsibilities, students are more likely to perceive them as inept, powerless, and vulnerable to manipulation (Cassebaum, 2001).

Many part-time instructors have not participated in an institutional orientation program and as a result, they have limited or erroneous perceptions of their responsibilities (Ilg & Raisch, 2000).

Even though part-time instructors typically have little or no contact with regular faculty, most have not been assigned faculty mentors (Wickun & Stanley, 2002).

Not infrequently, part-time instructors are given the least desirable teaching and clinical assignments and a low level of instructional support. As examples, they are assigned to remote classrooms and provided little direction about using technology to enhance their teaching (Watson & McGregor, 2002).

Many are part-time instructors feel disempowered by a lack of respect, both in the university in general and in the employing department specifically (Fulton, 2000). Such disconfirmation ultimately affects students who began to have a negative attitude toward their value placed on their course (Burk, 2000). Particularly in professional schools, part-time instructors are kept outside the mainstream of departmental governance and decision making (Popper, 1997); as such, they have little or no influence on critical instructional decisions.

In addition, there is a point at which the quantity of part-time instructors constitutes a serious organizational problem. Observing this fact, Shakeshaft (2002) aptly noted: "No high school principal would try to staff the curriculum with substitute teachers no matter how much the school board might save" (p. 30).

Problems also stem from inappropriate choices made by the part-time instructors. Consider the following examples.

Many practitioners encounter conflict between the demands of full-time practice and part-time teaching. When this dilemma occurs, practice-based responsibilities almost always take precedent (Lyons, Kysilka, & Pawlas, 1999); that is, classes get cancelled.

Part-time instructors usually realize that the stated purpose of their employment is to infuse practice into professional preparation. For some unfortunately, the objective is seen as an invitation to use class time solely to talk about themselves and their personal practice (Otto, 2000). Contrary to a widely-held belief, however, not all students are enamored by "war stories" or professors who engage in self-promotion (Lyons et al., 1999).

Often part-time instructors spend relatively little time preparing for class or dealing with class-related issues outside of the assigned meeting time. A recent study, for instance, reported that 48% of part-time instructors in school administration admitted spending less than five hours per week on class-related activities (AASA, 2002).

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Though DE is a relatively recent issue, considerable research has been conducted on the topic since 1980 (Reeves, 2005). At least part of it has addressed graduate courses. A review of findings reveals the following barriers pertinent to school administration courses:

Failing to provide adequate institutional preparation. Pressures to move to DE usually have been great and therefore, some institutions began offering courses with only a minimal amount of preparation (McArthur, Parker, & Giersch, 2003). Given the fact that many instructors have not wanted to change their style of instruction for online courses (Anderson & Middleton, 2002), such impetuous decisions have been highly problematic. In addition, courses often have been offered in the absence of a vision and strategic plan (McLean, 2005). In these situations, students have been unfairly subjected to trial and error experiments masquerading as legitimate courses (Schrum, 2000).

Failing to establish an appropriate organizational/administrative structure. The effective deployment of DE often has been hampered by issues such as ineffective or insufficient policy and regulations, authority ambiguity, and a lack of effective leadership and management. Jurisdictional disputes between DE administrators and department chairs, for example, have been relatively common. Such problems contribute to perceptions among full-time faculty that teaching DE courses is a precarious assignment (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005). Faculty reluctant to teach DE courses often mention concerns about a lack of administrative recognition and fiscal incentives (Maguire, 2005).

Excluding regular faculty from being involved in planning and management decisions. Many institutions have taken a “top-down” approach to adopting DE courses (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). In these situations, resentment produced by political-coercive change strategies (Kowalski, 2006) is virtually inevitable.

Allowing process and efficiency to trump substance. Studies of DE programs reveals that faculty often must make concessions related to course content either because of infrastructure limitations or because of efficiency measures. As a result, instructors feel that their academic freedom is being limited (Dahl, 2004; Navarro, 2000).

Assigning classes primarily to part-time faculty. A significant majority of DE courses have not been taught by tenured faculty or even full-time faculty (Goode, 2004). In part, this may be explained by two factors. First, preparing to teach DE courses takes much more time than preparing for a face-to-face course (Lorenzetti, 2004), a factor prompting many regular faculty to avoid these assignments. Second, DE courses are often scheduled and controlled by continuing education divisions (Husmann & Miller, 1999), units more inclined than academic departments to employ part-time instructors (Yang & Cornelious, 2005).

Failing to provide sufficient technical support. Both hardware and software problems, encountered by instructors and students, are virtually inevitable. Some institutions have offered too little or ineffective support (Rittschof & Griffin, 2003) and recognizing this fact, many professors have been dissuaded from teaching DE courses (Olcott & Wright, 1995).

Failing to assess student progress. Many instructors have elected to base student grades in DE courses largely on procedural participation (Hamilton, Dahlgren, Hult, Roos, & Soderstrom, 2004). In part, their decision may reflect a belief that cheating in these courses is relatively easy (Kennedy, Nowak, Raghuraman, Thomas, & Davis, 2000); hence, tests and term papers, the two most common tools for grading student learning (Menges & Austin, 2001) have been used less frequently than in face-to-face courses. Overall, negative stereotypes about the academic integrity of DE courses abound (Baron & Crooks, 2005).

Believing that DE is inexpensive. As noted several times, DE is only inexpensive when it is done ineffectively (Navarro, 2000). Although there are countless opinions on the long-term costs of this instructional approach, most analysts (e.g., Barbera, 2004; Rumble, 1997) agree that it is potentially more expensive than face-to-face instruction.

Failing to provide legal clarity. A variety of legal issues, such as copyright, intellectual property, and responsibility for course content, emerge in relation to DE (Throne, 2000). If these issues are not

clarified and if instructors are not given direction and assistance in dealing with them, the quality of the course usually suffers (Alger, 2002).

Failing to recognize/reward online teaching. Symbolically, rewards and recognition are manifestations of institutional culture (Kowalski, 2006). Faculty members quickly identify behaviors and choices that are valued. Yet, professors teaching DE courses often have received neither special credit toward promotion and tenure (Lee, 2002) nor monetary supplements to compensate for the additional planning time required (Schifter, 2000).

SYNTHESIS

Regardless of their potential to improve the quality of school administrator preparation, both the employment of practitioners as part-time faculty and DE course have produced a myriad of problems. In fact, a meta-analysis of research on these topics suggests that most universities encountered serious pitfalls and the extent to which these problems have been adjudicated has varied markedly. In large measure, both ideas were implemented carelessly and in the absence of visions, strategic plans, and adequate resources. Consequently during much of the 1990s, many regular full-time professors were at best indifferent toward these initiatives and, at worst, overtly opposed to them.

FULFILLING THE PROMISE

At least for the foreseeable future, the challenge for educational administration faculty is ensuring that the part-time instructors and DE courses are deployed effectively. This objective requires the participation of every professor. Often in the past, senior faculty members either refused to discuss these issues, or they stood on the sidelines and criticized those who were pursuing them. In the context of contemporary higher education, highly successful educational administration departments already are characterized by their ability to provide credible, effective preparation through multiple channels that give students flexibility in making choices for both pre-service and in-service education. In these departments, professors uniformly realize that they are responsible for ensuring that their programs are not treated as “cash cows.”

Recommendations for improving prevailing conditions are divided here into three categories. First, generic suggestions pertinent to both part-time instructors and DE are discussed. Then, proposals for improving each initiative specifically are summarized.

General Recommendations

Organizational aspects of reform are no different in educational administration departments than they are in public schools. In this vein, essential activities that address the complexity of organizational change need to be addressed. The following are the three essential actions:

1. *Creating a culture conducive to change and excellence.* Much of the resistance to deploying practitioners and DE courses has been nested in two erroneous assumptions: traditional preparation is highly effective and therefore, change is unnecessary. In truth, the quality of programs, and thus the need for change, varies markedly across the more than 500 institutions providing graduate courses in school administration (Kowalski, 2004). Authentic program reform requires faculty to first discuss and then evaluate their shared commitment to excellence and organizational development (Berquist, 1992).
2. *Creating or modifying a shared departmental vision.* In the absence of a shared vision, economic motives are likely to be the sole or primary determinant of staffing and delivery decisions. A clear and attainable portrait of the future broadens criteria for curricular and instructional decisions (Drabier, 2003; Ruben, 2004). Vision is especially crucial to online teaching because of the proclivity of regular faculty to be skeptical about the instructional paradigm (Hache, 2000; Moore, 1994).
3. *Creating or modifying a strategic plan.* Problems that developed in relation to part-time instructors and DE often lingered because they were not identified and analyzed in relation to departmental goals. Strategic planning provides a framework for correcting this error and a structure for determining if the vision needs to

be modified as a result of internal or external developments that were not anticipated when the vision was initially constructed (Kohrman & Trinkle, 2003). In addition, planning and policy should be intertwined (Gellman-Danley & Fetzner, 1998) because both statements ought to provide specific programming goals (Sachs, 2004).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEPLOYING PART-TIME INSTRUCTORS

Problems associated with part-time faculty have occurred because employment and deployment decisions have not been guided by institutional or departmental policy, or they have been guided by an outdated or incomplete policy. Of course, the specific nature of policy will depend on departmental culture, vision, and planning; however, Kowalski (2005b) identified the following as the most essential issues requiring coverage.

Recruitment and selection. Ideally, the recruitment and selection of part-time faculty should parallel procedures used for regular faculty. Clearly, this has not been the case at many institutions, primarily because normal employment activities can be expensive, time consuming, and politically divisive. Nevertheless, recruitment and employment policy for regular faculty reflect institutional culture and bypassing them usually creates tensions between regular and part-time faculty.

Employment parameters. Institutions differ with respect to rank, employment duration, and compensation. In the absence of policy on these matters, decisions are made on an ad hoc basis increasing vulnerability to inequities, conflict, and even legal problems.

Job descriptions. At a minimum, part-time faculty should be given job descriptions that address: (a) required and desired qualifications for each possible rank, (b) position responsibilities, (c) role expectations, (d) compensation parameters, and (e) other general conditions of employment. Most notably, they should include expectations regarding service to students outside of class and involvement in departmental activities.

Quantitative deployment standards. Two standards should be in place: the maximum number of assignments a part-time faculty member could assume over the course of a school year (including summer school) and the maximum percentage of departmental courses that can be assigned to part-time faculty over the course of a school year (including summer school). As general rules, full-time practitioners should not be assigned to more than two courses over a 12-month period, and no more than 25% of the department's courses (including clinics and internships) over the entire school year should be assigned to part-time instructors.

Orientation and mentoring. Part-time faculty should have ample information about institutional policy, procedures, and logistics (e.g., campus parking, library use). They should be given a notebook detailing pertinent information provided to regular employees and an opportunity to seek clarifications after having read this information. New part-time instructors should have a mentor, preferably a senior faculty member who has expertise in the assignment areas.

Deployment decisions. Assigning part-time faculty to courses for which they have extensive practitioner experience would appear axiomatic. After all, the primary justification for employing them is to infuse practice into preparation. However, a relatively recent study revealed that that one-third of the administrators seeking to teach part-time in a university were willing to be assigned to courses in which they had little knowledge (Beem, 2002). In light of this troubling finding, policy should stipulate that practitioners cannot be assigned to courses outside of their experiences as practitioners. For example, a principal who has not been employed as a business manager should not be assigned to teach a budgeting course.

Departmental involvement. Although requiring part-time faculty to attend all department meetings is unrealistic, effort should be made to have one or two meetings each year in which full-time and part-time faculty are together. These meetings should examine areas of collective interest, such as program evaluations, course revisions, student concerns, and so forth.

Formative and summative evaluations. Although most part-time instructors receive student ratings, it is unclear as to how these data are used. The formal evaluation of part-time faculty should be embedded in departmental policy and the process should be based on more than just student assessments (e.g.,

mentor and department chair assessments should be included). The process should be intended to help the instructors grow professionally and to inform future employment decisions.

Staff development. Relationships function best when they are mutually beneficial. In this vein, employing institutions should provide professional growth opportunities for part-time instructors. Three options may be considered: (a) involving part-time instructors in regular staff development programs, (b) involving them in activities designed specifically for adjunct faculty, and (c) involving them in individualized activities (e.g., providing technical assistance for designing visual materials for an online course). Staff development for part-time instructors can strengthen instruction and can reinforce the message that the contributions of these practitioners are valued.

Recognition. There are at least two reasons why the contributions of part-time instructors should be acknowledged and celebrated. First, recognition is likely to increase employee commitment and morale; second, recognition is likely to counteract negative student perceptions regarding the quality of instruction provided by part-time faculty.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Eliminating or diminishing the effects of common problems associated with DE also requires careful policy considerations. Ideally, department members have the advantage of being guided by university and college of education policy (Schauer, Rockwell, Fritz, & Marx, 2005) but clearly, this has not been an advantage enjoyed by some school administration programs. As noted previously, the specific nature of policy needed will vary depending on contextual variables and resources; however, action should be taken in each of the following areas.

University and college of education infrastructure. Three approaches have been used to offer online courses. The first is to allow individual professors to experiment by providing them access to whatever instructional technology assistance that may already exist in the university. The second is to allow selected departments to pursue this initiative by adding an instructional developer to assist faculty. The third is to pursue DE as an institutional initiative by creating an infrastructure and separate unit for developing and managing online courses. The last option is undeniably the most expensive and conflict-laden because it requires considerable investments in human and material resources. Equally noteworthy, philosophical and political resistance typically emerges either because some professors oppose DE or because they want scarce resources to be used for different purposes (Duin, Poley, Baer, Langer, & Pickett, 2002). Despite these conditions, experience has proven that pursuing DE institutionally is the most effective option (Sachs, 2004).

Regular faculty and decision making. Regular faculty involvement in the decision-making process has proven to be crucial to success (Maguire, 2005; Sachs, 2004). As institutional initiatives mature, the need for conceptualization, application, and evaluation become more important than technological applications (Beaudoin, 2003); therefore, professors need to guide course content and pedagogy. In addition, faculty participation serves a political purpose by creating a sense of ownership for decision participants (Hanson, 2003).

Process flexibility. Process rigidity can cause many problems in online teaching including faculty dissatisfaction. Describing this problem, Schrum (2000) noted that research with online MBA programs revealed that professors "had significant concerns about the pedagogical rigor left in their courses after modifications for online delivery had been mandated" (p. 44). Consequently, process requirements for online teaching should be sufficiently flexible to allow professors to deliver the content they deem essential.

Faculty preparation. Often, regular and part-time instructors have been assigned to teach online courses with minimal knowledge of this instructional approach. When this occurs, there is a proclivity to transpose face-to-face courses into a digital format—a design decision that has proven to be ineffective (Weigel, 2000). To avert this problem, policy should address both curricular and technological preparation. The former deals with adaptations of course content to online teaching; the latter deals with managing the instructional delivery systems. At a minimum, instructors should be

required to engage in planning with curriculum and technology consultants before teaching online courses (Goode, 2004).

Technical support. Technical problems with online courses are inevitable. Although many universities have created computer “help desks,” these operations may not provide timely assistance to instructors and students. Moreover, support systems can become outdated quickly if they are not improved continuously (Rittschof & Griffin, 2003).

Material resource support. As discussed previously, effective online courses are not inexpensive. Resources are especially important in two areas: financial incentives for regular faculty to participate in DE and financial support for acquiring materials and copyright permissions (Keaster, 2005).

Student assessment and academic honesty. The credibility of online courses has been damaged by the failure to provide effective policy on student assessment and cheating. In large measure, this problem has stemmed from the myopic beliefs that direct assessment (i.e., measures related to student learning) is impractical and that cheating is inevitable. In fact, there are many options for determining student learning objectively and fairly (Lorenzetti, 2004). Both policy and support mechanisms for dealing with direct assessment and cheating are necessary, and the key is to focus on assessment procedures that relate to higher cognitive processes (e.g., application and analysis of knowledge [Oosterhof, 1994]).

Intellectual property and copyright. Intellectual property embedded in online courses and copyright are gnarly problems for university administrators. In attempting to sidestep the first issue, some institutions, especially those treating DE as an inexpensive alternative to traditional courses, have used a “cookie cutter” approach. That is, experts are retained to design courses and then less inexpensive part-time instructors are employed to serve as tutors (Schrum, 2000). In addition to providing a questionable form of instruction, this approach discourages regular faculty from teaching online courses because they are not rewarded for ideas and materials they develop in relation to online courses. In addition, many of the possible advantages of online teaching (e.g., using video clips) are bypassed because of faculty concerns about violating copyright. Most instructors require assistance with this legal issue. Collectively, institutions need to protect their interests and maintain academic freedom. Therefore, intellectual property and copyright policies are essential (Gasaway, 2002).

Recognizing and rewarding online teaching. In the political context of academe, the value of any activity is weighed in relation to promotion and tenure. Thus, efforts to engage regular faculty in DE are enhanced when online teaching is recognized and rewarded in relation to these two employment variables (Rittschof & Griffin, 2003; Schrum, 2000). Moreover, establishing a reward for online teaching—one comparable to traditional scholarship, teaching, and service awards—is symbolically important.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The integration of theory and practice-based knowledge and providing continuing education are clearly essential goals in professional schools. Experience has proven, however, that infusing practitioners indiscriminately and simply making traditional courses more accessible do not ensure that either objective will be met. Quite the opposite, these two actions have drawn educational administration programs into a “race to the bottom;” that is, part-time faculty and DE are being deployed purely for economic and managerial reasons causing the quality and credibility of preparation to decline rapidly. As an example, some departments already are staffed predominantly by part-time faculty who basically tutor courses that were designed by others and then delivered through a medium that the assigned instructors had not mastered. Thus at a time when the profession should be responding to intense criticism by initiating authentic reform, it instead has turned a blind eye to the fact that each year new programs ill-equipped to offer quality professional preparation are allowed to open (Kowalski, 2004).

Clearly, the deployment of practitioners as part-time instructors and the delivery of courses via DE have become two-edged swords. On the one hand, they are promising reform initiatives and on the other hand, they are counterproductive actions. In large measure, their future influence on the profession depends on decisions made by regular faculty. If they elect to stand on the high ground, staring into the swamp and pretending that they are

unaffected by these issues, then the continuing downward spiral to the bottom seems inevitable. If instead they elect to wade into the murky water, their participation in critical decisions can help convince university administrators and policymakers that quality is more important than efficiency. Only then will the promises offered by the infusion of practitioners and DE be realized.

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Best Practice: Instructional Leadership Through Teacher Evaluation

Louis Wildman

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe “best practice” in teacher evaluation—a process principals can utilize to systematically help teachers improve student achievement. When asked, teachers typically have little that is good to say about teacher evaluation. When they know the principal is coming to evaluate, beginning teachers often put on a demonstration lesson that is unlike their normal teaching style. After the lesson, when meeting with the principal, they are often nervous because they don’t know what the principal may criticize. The whole procedure becomes something of a farce, unnecessarily removed from the critical need to improve student achievement (Danielson, 2001; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Duke & Stiggins, 1990; Peterson, 2000; Scriven, 1990; Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995; Stronge 1997; Stronge & Tucker, 2003).

Principals can utilize teacher evaluation to systematically and collegially work with teachers to improve student achievement, and this chapter seeks to explain this “best practice” in teacher evaluation.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Prior to the school year, the administrative team should start at a very practical level by making sure that those expected measurable teacher requirements such as arrival and departure times, attendance keeping, student disciplinary procedures, continuing education credit requirements, and whatever other building and system-wide rules that a school district wants all teachers to follow are specified in an appropriate document, such as the teacher/district contract or the district/teacher handbook. Minimum standards for these requirements should be clearly defined, and regularly monitored. Experience has shown that teachers who fail to abide by these requirements are frequently failing in other areas of responsibility. Employees in all work situations must meet certain basic rules and regulations, and in this respect teachers are no different. Failure to meet reasonable well-defined job requirements provides an employer clearer justification for dismissal than basing termination on teaching competence or another area of responsibility which is much more difficult to define.

GOAL SETTING

By the start of the school year, the superintendent and school board will have identified the coming year’s district goals. These goals typically pertain to improving standardized test scores and/or implementing new curriculum.

In September, all teachers should meet with their principal to reach an agreement on what each teacher will do as employees to help the district accomplish its goals. At these conferences, teachers should also identify their own professional goals for the coming year, and both the teacher’s professional goals and what they will do to help accomplish the district goals should be stated in writing.

Those who conceive of “schools as factories” may question why principals would be talking with teachers about their personal and professional goals (Bobbitt, 1913; Callahan, 1962). After all, if schools are being evaluated on the extent to which they teach state standards, why should principals care about anything besides the teaching of those state standards? The reason is that schools are not factories. Yes, schools have a responsibility for teaching the next generation the standards which the public feels are important, but schools also have a responsibility for developing the unique talents and abilities of each student. Similarly, teachers are paid to teach students state standards, but teachers also have professional interests and expertise. If students should learn state standards as well as be encouraged to develop their unique talents and abilities, then teachers are most likely to perform this dual role if a school district recognizes that teachers should teach state standards but also continue to develop their own professional interests and expertise.

Unfortunately, many school districts hire teachers solely on the basis of what they can do for the school district. More insightful school districts hire teachers who are not only competent to perform needed functions for the school district, but who can also develop their professional interests and expertise within the school district setting. For example, two qualified science teacher candidates might apply for a high school science teaching position. While both are qualified, one science teacher has an interest in wind power, and the other in desert plants. If the school is located in a windy area not close to a desert, it certainly makes sense to hire the science candidate with an interest in wind power. That teacher can then do the assigned teaching job, but also pursue their scientific interest and thereby model what we hope all students will do: namely learn the state standards and pursue their unique interests. Such teachers are more likely to stay, providing the school district with the benefits of having a stable experienced faculty who also possess applicable expertise outside the school classroom.

Meeting individually with teachers to discuss their “district” and “professional” goals in September will allow principals to systematically and cooperatively lead instructional improvement. Principals will thereby better be able to coordinate district goal accomplishment within their school and be able to better facilitate individual teacher professional interests. In too many schools, principals do not pay attention to individual teacher professional interests, and thereby get less professional commitment than would otherwise be the case. Teacher evaluation should involve a cooperative effort among professionals.

Here are some examples of district and personal professional goals:

District Goals:

1. All seniors will have acquired vocational competence sufficient to obtain entry level employment.
2. All high school students will establish a close relationship with at least one faculty member or administrator.

A Personal Goal:

1. To become familiar with the research supporting the concept of emotional intelligence.

EARLY MONITORING OF NEW TEACHERS

During the first few weeks of the school year, principals should pay particular attention to new teachers, and drop by their classrooms for short visits to check to make sure that their classes are being conducted reasonably well. The intent of such early classroom visits should not be to formally evaluate, but rather to assist the new teacher in getting off to a good start.

New teachers directly out of schools of education typically bring high ideals and many ideas. Some school districts immediately “induct” these new teachers in a manner which squelches their idealism. New teachers should be perceived as an excellent source for new ideas, and principals will be rewarded with the continuing dedication of these new teachers if the principal listens and tries to facilitate their ideas.

October and November

The first formal teacher observations should take place in October and November. During this time new teachers should all be formally observed at least once, and those tenured teachers who will be evaluated during

the present year should also be observed at least once in October or November. (Note: Tenured teachers in many states are only evaluated every other year, or even less frequently.)

THE THREE “DIMENSIONS” OF TEACHER EVALUATION

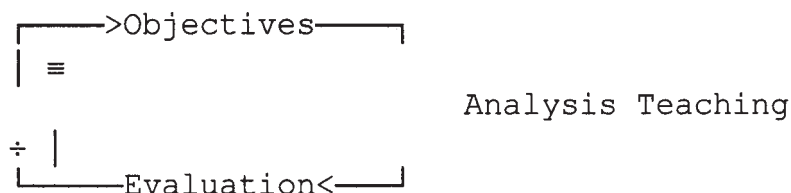
The key question is how to proceed? A good teacher evaluation procedure must be workable and weed-out incompetent teachers. It must be based upon objective standards that go beyond mere personal opinion of a principal; it should focus on the teacher’s responsibilities and what is under the teacher’s control, as well as protect teacher ingenuity, creativity and initiative; and, it must facilitate public accountability. In other words, a good teacher evaluation procedure must embody four basic values: feasibility, accuracy, propriety, and utility (Joint Committee, 1988). Further, one should think in terms of the three relevant groups: teachers, students, and the public. Teachers need academic freedom, but they also must teach at a competency level certainly beyond the “beginning” level of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Likewise, students are entitled to student academic freedom to develop in unique and wonderful ways, but they also need an additional number of opportunities to learn, if they don’t master what they are being taught, the first time. Finally, the public wants accountability, including an accurate accounting of what they are paying for.

Now let’s address teaching.

THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSES OF TEACHING

Teaching has two fundamental purposes, analogous to a basic “opposition in laws” (or antinomy) in life between openness to change and the desire to preserve a pre-existing view or conviction. That opposition in laws was identified by the social psychologists, Edward Jones and Howard Gerard (1967). They spent a year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, sorting and reviewing research in the field of social psychology, and tentatively reached this conclusion in their book, *Foundations of Social Psychology*. This fundamental antinomy pits stability and self-maintenance on the one hand against openness to change and stimulation on the other. As Jones and Gerard point out: “If either side of this antinomy should become completely dominant, it is hard to see how the individual could survive as an intact, effective organism (p. 664).” Similarly both sides of this antinomy are necessary in education: schools desire to pass on to their students pre-existing views (which I call expository instruction) as well as encourage students to develop their own talents and interests (investigatory instruction).

Expository education can be modeled by a “closed” feedback loop, whereas investigatory education is essentially “open-ended.” Lee Shulman has defined teaching as a process by which teachers make reasonable decisions with the intent of helping students reach worthwhile educational outcomes and learn from the consequences of these decisions in order to improve their teaching. This is expository teaching which can be represented by the following schematic:



On the other hand, within an investigatory mode we assist the student by helping the child develop his or her talents and interests. While learning pre-defined standards, teachers also need to coach students as they pursue ideas, cultivating their intuition and imagination. “But,” as Ken Macrorie says, presently “enabling goes so much against the grain of the Lecture-Test-Grade System that the lives of enablers can be painful and dangerous. Enablers can be harassed by administrators, they can be scoffed at by colleagues, they can be fired (Macrorie, 1984). Obviously we need to change this situation. The key lies in applying this fundamental antinomy in education to establish an appropriate balance between accountability and legitimate professional academic freedom.

It should also be acknowledged that the extent of current research on teaching does not justify specific teaching directives. Even such strong proponents of process-product research as Margaret Needels and N.L. Gage state that

... process-product research findings should not be used to develop instruments (checklists, rating scales, observation schedules) for summary evaluations of teachers. Such a use of process-product research findings could push teaching toward becoming unthinking and mechanical. Teachers would begin to behave in the ways dictated by the valuation form and give inadequate thought to the appropriateness of their behavior. (Waxman & Walbert, 1991, p. 23)

For example, we can agree that constructivist learning theory suggests that teachers should “connect students’ prior knowledge, life experience, and interests with learning goals,” but how teachers do that is somewhat subjective and part of the art of teaching.

Predictably, expository instruction will soon be largely automated. We can conceive of expository teaching in terms of increasingly automated feedback loops that improve with experience. Lee Shulman (1988) found that teachers who have been teaching 10 or 15 years more often get directly to the issues, know exactly where they want to go, and can foresee the problems that students will have in understanding the work, whereas new teachers tend to teach from the perspective of the content. It would seem possible to build the thought processes of experienced teachers into the design of instructional technology through the use of artificial intelligence methodology.

Hence, it seems that this is the emerging teaching situation:

1. While both the expository and investigatory sides of the curriculum are important, all teachers need to specify their curriculum objectives when engaged in expository teaching. (Investigatory teaching can be assisted by providing students with examples of excellence.)
2. Teachers within an automated or traditional expository mode need to learn from the consequences of their decisions in order to improve their teaching.
3. Expository instruction will increasingly be given over to automated tutorial means. And,
4. Teachers need to establish the atmosphere of a learning community within schools so as to promote the usefulness of teachers working within the investigatory mode, holding off the “efficiency experts” who would eliminate teachers like orchestral musicians were eliminated at the end of the silent film era.

In light of the foregoing, it is essential that teachers be required to specify the standards which they intend to teach, and objectively evaluate students on the basis of those standards. For many teachers, these standards will be the required state standards.

Now let’s talk about this requirement: Recall why so many therapeutic procedures in Freud’s day were not discovered as being ineffectual—there was no clear specification of what changes were intended. Likewise it was not possible for many teachers to judge whether or not they had been successful, because they were primarily concerned with filling the day with activities rather than working toward specific standards. (Bandura, 1969)

Also it is important to note why we are emphasizing evaluation of students on the basis of those standards. If expository teaching is “the process by which teachers make reasonable decisions” learning “from the consequences of these decisions in order to improve their teaching” then teachers must evaluate students in terms of their standards. There is no other way for a teacher to learn from the consequences of their decisions.

Why Not Evaluate Teachers on the Basis of Student Performance?

Eric Hanuschek, John Kain, Daniel O’Brien, and Steven Rivkin (2005) report research based on the premise that good teachers increase student achievement, and that since other teacher characteristics—such as possession of a master’s degree—don’t seem to correlate with student achievement, those other characteristics don’t matter much. It would logically follow that teachers should be evaluated and paid on the extent to which they raise student achievement.

There are many problems with that approach. The first is that it narrows a teacher’s role to improving student

test scores. Can you imagine the result? A similar plan was tried within the Internal Revenue Service. However, on December 13, 1997, the IRS, in a self-audit concluded that “the overall focus on measuring performance via productivity goals is unbalanced.” The IRS admitted that taxpayers’ rights were being abused by a system-wide climate of high pressure that encouraged IRS auditors to go to improper lengths to meet statistical benchmarks, and issued an extraordinary public apology.

Evaluating just on test scores would completely ignore the investigatory side of education, the wide range of subjects taught (How would one compare student achievement in physical education with student achievement in music or biology?), as well as the emotional/personal developmental aspects of students. Even if one were just interested in improving student test scores, the problem with that approach is that many factors outside the teacher’s control effect student learning. One large factor is family wealth. In Kern County, California (which includes Bakersfield), the 2004 correlation between student achievement scores and the percentages in schools of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunches was -0.848 for elementary schools, -0.896 for middle schools and -0.631 for high schools. The same correlations for 2005 were -0.836 , -0.909 and -0.656 . All of these correlations are significant beyond the .01 level, showing the likely very strong relationship between student achievement and family wealth. If one uses analysis of covariance to statistically “take out” just that one factor, there is no significant difference between Kern County schools on achievement test scores.

Using student achievement scores to evaluate teachers would not be a fair approach. Fortunately in California there is a law which prohibits this:

44662(d) The evaluation and assessment of certificated employee performance pursuant to this section shall not include the use of publishers’ norms established by standardized tests. (California Education Code)

As the saying goes, “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” There are many factors besides what teachers do which powerfully influence student learning.

On the other hand, each teacher is solely responsible for evaluating students and making reasonable decisions based upon that evaluation. Similarly, we say that a physician is guilty of malpractice if he or she doesn’t evaluate a patient objectively and make reasonable decisions based upon that evaluation.

With this background we are ready to schedule the first formal observation. It will include a pre-observation conference, a classroom observation, and a post-observation conference.

The Pre-Observation Conference

Teacher evaluation offers the principal an opportunity to cooperatively work with teachers on improving student achievement, but the principal first needs an in-depth understanding of the instructional situation. The teacher being evaluated should bring to the pre-conference a matrix showing the principal the present status of student achievement in their class. The matrix should list course standards across the top and the names of students down the left side. Data within the matrix will show student progress, and provide the basis for engaging in a team effort to improve student performance. (See Appendix A.)

Here are some questions principals may wish to consider with teachers while reviewing such a matrix:

1. Is the data reliable and valid? Does the teacher have an accurate understanding of how well the students are progressing, so that the teacher can modify his or her behavior, based upon evaluation results? (Over the past few years, many educators have been professionally embarrassed to find that their evaluation of students, as reported in terms of grades, are not reflective of standardized student achievement test scores.)
2. How “quality conscious” is this teacher? How thorough is the teacher? If some students don’t get the material, does the teacher forget the matter, or does the teacher try additional strategies, improving their rate of instructional effectiveness? What special resources, questioning techniques, or motivational techniques will be used? What alternative instructional strategies will the teacher utilize for those students who are not learning the course standards?
3. Are there special circumstances which are effecting student achievement, such as scheduling problems, resource problems, etc. Are there special circumstances or special student characteristics which are worthy of note?

4. Are the objectives appropriate in terms of the students' level of maturational development?
5. Have the students learned the necessary prerequisites?
6. Do the objectives help accomplish the school's mission?
7. Do the objectives emphasize authentic, meaningful instructional content?
8. Are the objectives central to this academic discipline?
9. Do the objectives reflect the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains?
10. Do the objectives address all six levels—particularly the upper levels—of Bloom's Taxonomy?
11. Do the objectives address both "procedural" as well as "conceptual" knowledge?
12. Do the objectives overwhelm the student with information, otherwise easily available?
13. Are the objectives "narrow" for most students and "broad" for an elite few?
14. Have viable alternative ways of reaching the agreed upon objectives been identified?
15. Do the students understand where the lessons are headed, and are the students interested in heading in that direction?
16. Are sufficient resources available to implement instructional plans?

The pre-observation conference should inform the principal about the teaching situation so that the teacher and the principal can work together to improve student achievement. The teacher should tell the principal about existing special circumstances in the classroom including distracting noises, environmental factors, special student considerations, or use of unique teaching methodologies (in other words, anything that the teacher wants the principal to look for or be pre-disposed for as the principal observes the class). (For an example, see Appendix B.)

Teachers should know that they are being evaluated on whether they have identified the standards which they are to teach and whether they have accurately evaluated the students on those standards. Notice that we are talking about actions solely under the control of the teacher. A major assumption of this approach to teacher evaluation is that a teacher who has an accurate understanding of class student achievement is in an excellent position to both remediate as well as teach new material.

Teacher Observation

The classroom observation should again inform the principal about the teaching situation so that the teacher and the principal can meaningfully work together to improve student achievement. It is important that the principal be punctual and not postpone a classroom observation unless there is a dire emergency.

There are many techniques for teacher observation, such as "scripting" (making a verbatim record of classroom discourse), and Flander's "Interaction Analysis." (Brophy, 1986) Unfortunately, these observation techniques have limited prescriptive value. Their main value is as a "mirror" for the teacher, so that the teacher can determine whether he or she is teaching as intended.

While observing, the principal can often walk around the classroom and talk to students about what they are doing and why. However, if the lesson doesn't permit this interaction, the observer should not disrupt the class by insisting upon talking with students. In either case, the principal should communicate an interest in the curriculum and support for the teacher's efforts, verbally or through his/her body language.

If students are using laptop computers in the classroom, a principal might take a laptop computer into the classroom and type observation comments while the teacher is teaching. However, this should not be done if it distracts the students. At the end of the observation, it may be appropriate for the principal to mention to the class his/her interest in what they are learning.

While observing, the principal should consider many questions drawn from learning theory: Is the teacher connecting subject matter knowledge to the learner's previous understanding? How meaningful to the students is the curriculum? Will the students be able to apply what is being taught and be given the opportunity to do so?

While observing, the observer must resist the temptation to compare the teacher's teaching style to the observer's own teaching style. Rather the observer must seek to observe "through the eyes" of the teacher.

One difficulty with teacher observation is that it lacks objectivity. The sampling is inevitably weak. The pres-

ence of the observer changes the teaching environment. Often the special lesson which the teacher teaches during an observation is not typical of their normal teaching.

So, barring academic errors in presentation or violations of prescribed procedures for dealing with undisciplined student conduct or the like, teacher observation is necessary but not as central as it once was to summative teacher evaluation. The teacher should feel free to try various instructional strategies, but also be required to accurately assess student learning. In this way we avoid evaluating teachers on the basis of student achievement.

The Post-Observation Conference

The post-observation conference should be scheduled within a day or two of the observation, as a longer delay makes meaningful reflection more difficult and teachers are naturally anxious to complete the observation cycle.

By the time of the post-observation conference, the principal should have learned a lot about the teacher's teaching and student outcomes. The teacher should be prepared to answer questions about how the lesson went. What were the strengths? How did students respond? How did the students interpret their classroom experience? How might the lesson be changed? What plans are there for follow-up? In other words, at the post-observation conference, the teacher should present additional information to the principal about how he or she "saw" the observed lesson, so that the principal and teacher can discuss the teacher's pedagogical thinking.

However, it is also important for the principal to come to the post-observation conference having done some research on alternative instructional techniques or curriculum strategies which can be suggested. This is where we want the principal to show some instructional leadership—not just vague ideas, but real strategies and materials—so that the teacher and principal proceed to actually work cooperatively together improving student achievement. (See Appendix C.)

Why Not Use a Check-off List Based Upon the California Standards for the Teaching Profession?

The California Standards for the Teaching Profession are all individually excellent. However, as Art Combs said,

The creation of long lists of competencies is likely to be deeply discouraging and disillusioning to the young teacher. . . A vast complex of competencies, all of which are demanded as criteria for good teaching, leaves the individual defenseless before criticism. No matter what he does well, it is never enough! There is always so much more that he might have done, or should have done, that he can rarely find pleasure or satisfaction in his accomplishments. Add to this the fact that many of the competencies demanded do not fit the particular personality, and so could probably never be achieved anyhow, and the defeat of the individual becomes almost inevitable. In time, the feeling of inadequacy produced by continual failure to meet impossible goals undermines professional pride and is likely to produce a guilt-ridden teacher suffering from a secret feeling of being "too little and too late." It should not be surprising if after years of this kind of experience the will to try shrivels and dies. (Combs, 1965)

Thus the California Standards for the Teaching Profession with the accompanying rubrics should be utilized cautiously and judiciously, particularly during discussions about the observed teaching, but not used as a check list.

December

December is a time to catch up on formal evaluations which were delayed, as well as a time to meet with all teachers on their personal professional and district goals. If individual conferences on goals are not held, the school year will end without their accomplishment.

January-February and March-April

These are months for two additional teacher observation cycles for new teachers and for tenured teachers being evaluated.

In many states, end-of-year teacher evaluation reports are due by the middle of March. Using this teacher evaluation approach the principal will make a summative decision considering primarily the following five questions:

1. Has the teacher abided by the district rules and regulations?
2. Has the teacher identified an approved set of curriculum standards?
3. Has the teacher conducted their classes in a professionally competent manner?
4. Has the teacher's evaluation been conducted in a valid and reliable manner, based upon an approved set of curriculum standards?
5. Does the teacher provide students who have not yet attained the approved curriculum standards viable alternative instruction?

Notice that the five questions pertain solely to the professional responsibilities of the teacher being evaluated. Yes, we want teachers to do far more than this, but here we are concentrating on those key elements of teaching which have a solid rationale, which can be evaluated fairly objectively, which do not potentially infringe on a teacher's legitimate academic freedom, and which facilitate a principal's school instructional leadership.

There are limitations to this teacher evaluation procedure. The emphasis upon accurate evaluation of students, while tempered by the requirement that the teacher provide viable alternative instruction, leaves some room for an irresponsible teacher to say "I know the students are not learning the material, but I'm teaching it in several viable ways." Admittedly this could happen, but it is not likely, and this weakness is certainly not as great as problems with other approaches to teacher evaluation mentioned above.

May-June

These are months for end-of-year personal professional and district goal conferences, as well as a time for providing special help to teachers on plans of assistance.

SUMMARY

Remember, a successful teacher evaluation procedure balances professionalism with accountability, without stifling teacher creativity.

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APPENDIX A

Pre-Observation Material Brought By a Kindergarten Teacher:

Objectives and Evaluation Criteria:

Kindergarten students will:

1. Identify six basic shapes: Given paper cutouts of eight shapes, the students will pick each one up and identify its shape. The student is successful when he/she can name the six shapes correctly.
2. Identify eight basic colors: Students will place circles in a color puzzle saying each color as they do. A student is successful when he or she can name all eight colors . . .

Matrix Showing Student Achievement

	1	2
AA	X	X
AHA	X	X
CM	X	
CR		
DB	X	X
DD	X	X
ER	X	X
EW		
JB	X	X
JH	X	X
JL	X	
KH	X	X
LG	X	X
MQ	X	X
MR	X	X
MS	X	X
RM	X	X
SE	X	X
SG	X	
TW	X	X

Analysis and Alternatives for Students Not Meeting Criteria:

Two students have not met either objective 1 or 2. Three additional students have not met objective 2. In the classroom, colors and shapes will be reviewed daily with the whole group during the “calendar” activity. Parent volunteers will work with these students using shape attributes—blocks, cookie cutters and Play Doh—identifying shapes and colors in magazines as well as cutting, coloring and labeling them. All students will be tested weekly to determine which shapes to focus on, as the testing of students at this age level is often unreliable. At home, parents will be asked to help their children identify shapes in the environment and assist their child in completing extra “shape” homework.

APPENDIX B

Special Circumstances:

1. Are there any special circumstances that I should be aware of?

A couple of my students will leave the room to go for speech services. I will have a volunteer work with them later.

2. Are there any special student characteristics that you want me to be aware of or note?

My class this year is a little more verbal than usual—they talk tasks through with each other when they work in pairs.

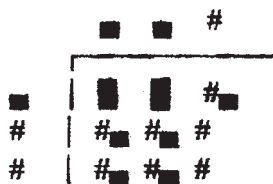
As long as they are on task that is okay! (Barnes, 2002)

APPENDIX C

A Principal's Instructional Leadership—Examples

1. During the post-observation conference, an algebra teacher and principal agreed that many students lack motivation to learn the material, partly because they don't understand why they need to take algebra. In response the principal arranges for a local energy consultant to show students how he uses algebra in his profession.
2. Students in an algebra class were having difficulty multiplying two binomials of the form $(ax + b)$. The principal suggested the use of tiles to physically represent this type of multiplication.

$$(x + 2)(2x + 1) = 2x^2 + 5x + 2$$



BEST PRACTICES IN DESIGNING PROGRAMS

Best Practices in School Leadership Training and Development

Kathleen Campbell and Betty Porter

BACKGROUND

After the Harvard Principals' Center was founded in 1981, a multitude of principal centers focusing on the professional development of school leaders arose all over the country. Although each principal center is different, there are some common features, in particular the providing of professional development for school leaders. Many principal centers offer the kind of professional development opportunities that deal with specific contextual situations in a school setting. Generally, though, opportunities for professional development of principals tend to be sporadic and subject-oriented (Porter & Campbell, 2006). The School Leadership Center (SLC), which was developed through collaboration between a local foundation, the University of New Orleans, and Xavier University of Louisiana, is unique in the cohesive professional development it provides. Through the Fellows Program, the SLC uses research-based best practices of both shared instructional and transformational leadership to develop and enhance the leadership skills of current school leaders, with the ultimate goal of improving educational outcomes for students in the five-parish area of Greater New Orleans.

In an extensive review of the literature, Cotton (2003) provides evidence of a direct link between the leadership of the school principal and student achievement. Furthermore, Findley and Findley (1992) claimed that the success of a school can be directly attributable to the leadership of the principal. By focusing on school improvement and increased student achievement, the professional development provided by the SLC emphasizes the best practices from the shared instructional leadership model and the transformational leadership model, both of which are important in creating a culture of collaboration and school improvement and subsequent increased student achievement (Cotton, 2003).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON BEST PRACTICES OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

After two decades of research on successful schools, many best practices have surfaced repeatedly in the literature, including but not limited to the following: shared vision, collaboration, participative decision making, professional development of teachers and principals, data-driven decision making, action research, instructional focus, and reflection. All of these are included in the two-year program of professional development which the Fellows undergo.

Burns (1978) first introduced the theory of transformational leadership, which was later modified by Bass (1985, 1990, 1998) for use in various settings. Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) applied the concept to school leadership, claiming that transformational leadership was appropriate in effecting change. Northouse (2003) asserted that transformational leaders "attempt to raise the consciousness in individuals and to get them to transcend their own self interests for the sake of others" (p. 142). Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2004) maintained that "[t]he *transformational leader* shares power, inspires others to leadership, and encourages participation and involvement of all members in executing the school's purpose" (p. 12).

Leithwood (2005) delineated three categories of transformational leadership functions: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Furthermore, each category is comprised of specific leader behaviors, or professional best practices. Setting directions includes building a vision, developing goals and priorities, and holding high expectations; developing people includes providing intellectual stimulation and individualized support as well as modeling professional practices; reorganizing includes developing a collaborative school culture and providing structures that foster participative decision making, and creating positive community relationships.

Instructional leadership is another model that impacts the culture of learning in a school community. “Decades of research have found that a principal’s strong focus on academics is a key determinant of school achievement outcomes” (Cotton, 2003, p. 9). O’Donnell and White (2005) asserted that “instructional leadership provided by the principal has been identified as a contributing factor to higher student achievement” (p. 56).

Hallinger (2003) constructed a model identifying three categories of instructional leadership and specific behaviors associated with each: (1) defining the school’s mission, which includes the development and communication of specific goals to the school community; (2) managing the instructional program, which includes supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordination of the curriculum, and the monitoring of student progress; and (3) promoting a positive school learning climate, which includes the protection of instructional time, the promotion of professional development, the maintenance of high visibility, the creation of incentives for teachers, and the provision of incentives for learning.

King (2002) found that successful instructional leaders engage in the following best practices: they become lead learners; they focus on improving teaching and learning; they develop instructional leadership capacity in others; they create conditions conducive to professional learning communities; they use data to inform decisions; and they creatively use all resources for school improvement. Sergiovanni (2001) contended that any theory of management and leadership for school principals must give primary attention to the best practices of “professional socialization, shared values, and collegiality and interdependence . . . because they match the complexity of teaching and learning at its best” (p. 67).

Cotton (2003) focused on five categories of principal best practices that impact student achievement: (1) establishing a clear focus on student learning (including vision and high expectations); (2) interactions and relationships (including communication/interaction, visibility, accessibility); (3) school culture (including shared leadership/decision-making and collaboration); (4) instruction (including discussion of instructional issues, classroom observations and feedback, support of teacher autonomy, protection of instructional time); and (5) accountability (including monitoring student progress, using student data for decisions about school improvement).

Studies have shown that the schools with the largest increases in student achievement had the following common features: time for teacher collaboration, timely and frequent feedback to teachers and students, extended time for literacy and mathematics, action research and midcourse corrections, assignments of teachers to their areas of strength and preparation, analysis of student data, common and frequent classroom assessment, holistic accountability of every adult in the system, and cross-disciplinary integration (Reeves, 2004).

The combination of transformational and shared instructional leadership can significantly impact a school learning community. Cotton (2003) maintained that both the academic focus and the transformational leadership of a principal are positively related to increased student achievement.

Leithwood (2005) recognized the power of transformational and instructional leadership models, yet drew a distinction between the two: “Whereas instructional leadership aims to narrow the focus of leaders to the core technology of their organizations, transformational leadership asks them to adopt a much broader, more systemic, view of their work” (p. 9). Marks and Printy (2003) acknowledged the complementary nature of transformational and instructional leadership but distinguished between the two in asserting that the former builds organizational capacity while the latter “builds individual and collective competence” (p. 377). However, the results of their study of the impact of integrative leadership (combination of transformational and instructional) on student achievement provide evidence that the powerful integration of transformational and instructional leadership leads to higher student achievement. “Where integrated leadership was normative, teachers provided evidence of high-quality pedagogy and students performed at high levels on authentic measures of achievement” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 392).

The SLC staff believes that when professional development which is designed to encompass all of the best practices mentioned above is supplied to educational leaders, schools will improve because of the incontrovertible link between effective school leadership and increased student achievement. Evaluations of the SLC Fellows Program support this belief. In all of the reports from the external evaluator (Leithwood, 2003), the SLC was considered a significant contributor to the success of the schools whose principals were Fellows. The external evaluation provides rare empirical support for the claim that well designed leadership development programs are capable of enhancing student learning. Using school performance scores and student scores on the state achievement tests, the scores of the schools participating in the SLC programs increased at least 20% more than the other schools in those districts every year since the inception of the program. In fact, in the largest school district involved, the scores improved at a 124% greater rate than the other schools in that district. These data combined with qualitative data generated by the reflections of Fellows strongly suggest the effectiveness of the SLC in developing school leaders. The success of the Fellows Program indicates the need to examine its structure for replication.

The SLC programs reflect a mix of conventional and unusual services designed around best practices. This design is based on the beliefs held by SLC about learning organizations, and it provides a model of best practices that the Fellows are encouraged to incorporate into their schools. Eight primary program areas are designed to present best practices for Fellows to set up in their schools or to copy into their own programs. The eight program areas are the Fellows Program, the School Leadership Center Learning Initiatives (SLC-LI), conferences and workshops, the Aspiring Leaders program, the Research Office, the Superintendent's Summit, the Coaching Program, and the Assistant Principal's Program. Each of these will be examined under the best practice section that the particular program exemplifies.

BEST PRACTICES

Shared Vision, Collaboration, and Participative Decision Making

The Fellows Program is the flagship program of the School Leadership Center. Each year a committee of Fellows chooses a new cohort of principals from applicants from public and nonpublic schools in the five parish area. Acceptance of a Fellow's position carries with it significant rights and responsibilities and is the beginning of intense training in best practices.

When Fellows sign their contracts with SLC, they commit to participating in certain activities that are designed to focus their attention on leadership development for school improvement. First, in year one, Fellows participate in three pre-institute staff development programs that deal with vision building, school improvement, and analysis of school performance data. Second, Fellows participate in a week-long Summer Institute for two consecutive summers. These Summer Institutes build on the pre-institutes and train the Fellows in best practices such as building a collaborative school culture, creating a shared vision, and fostering participative and data-driven decision making. These Fellows are polled after Summer Institutes on their schools' needs so that post-institute sessions can be designed and conducted to have maximum impact on school goals. Third, Fellows are promised a sizable grant (\$10,000) at the end of the program for use in implementing some facet of their schools' improvement plan. SLC staff members work with each Fellow to ensure that these moneys are targeted for significant student impact and that plans have a sound evaluation component. Once principals enter the Fellows Program, they continue in this culture of best practices through the other programs and workshops that are offered by SLC.

The professional development of the Fellows Program begins to nurture the culture of shared vision and collaboration. This culture is continued in another area developed under the Fellows program called School Leadership Center Learning Initiatives (SLC-LI). This facet of SLC program offerings was started as a result of Fellow input and ideas generated with the evaluator of the SLC. In SLC-LI, which new Fellows must embrace as a part of their Fellowship commitment, principals work together with their school leadership teams on the design, implementation, and evaluation of their schools' annual improvement plans. In many instances, this is the first time principals have assembled a school leadership team and collaborated on a shared vision for their school. In forming this shared vision, principals engage in building leadership capacity. They also work in loose collaboration with other SLC schools that have targeted similar school improvement objectives. They receive facili-

tated training, data disaggregation services, and support for implementation and evaluation of their school plans. This represents a concerted effort to connect leadership activity more directly with school improvement through collaboration, both within and across local schools. To continue this process, on four Saturdays throughout the year following the first Summer Institute, the SLC provides a facility in which to meet, professionals to guide planning, stipends for teachers, and lunch. Principals are thus given the gift of time to meet with their leadership teams in promoting shared leadership of collaboration and participative decision making in a context of collaboration that underscores the importance of these practices.

Professional Development of Principals and Teachers

The Summer Institute is the highlight of the Fellow experience. The activities that take place during Summer Institute are designed for Fellows to use and model throughout the school year. A welcome banquet, division of Fellows into “families” and educational games begin to help the new Fellows become acquainted with the rest of their family. This is just the beginning of the collegiality that makes the experience authentic and lasting and which can be replicated at their school sites at the beginning of the school year to produce similar results with their own faculties. The next two days of intense professional development focus on the importance of the school principal as the change agent/instructional leader in the school. While the presentation itself is a model of what is expected of principals to do to promote a culture of learning, it also presents instructional methods for principals to use primarily in faculty meetings as an example of what teachers should use within the classrooms. Thus, the presentations serve both as professional development for principals and demonstrations for principals to model for their teachers.

The Summer Institute provides intense, direct professional development for principals on the topics of instruction, collaboration with faculty, using data to make decisions, and the sharing of methods and programs that have worked in other Fellows’ schools. In addition, the feedback from principals during this time has spawned another program called Aspiring Leaders. Aspiring Leaders is a professional development program to prepare teachers for advancement as aspiring principals or teacher leaders within their schools. This program continues the professional development of best practices in instruction while providing opportunities for these teachers to meet and collaborate with experts within their districts. The Aspiring Leaders program thus creates conditions conducive to the development of leadership capacity.

Ongoing opportunities for Fellows in the area of professional development are provided by the numerous workshops and seminars that are offered throughout the year. These workshops and seminars are also examples of collaboration and shared vision as the topics covered are generated by a leadership committee within the Fellows Program called the Principals’ Advisory Board. Any Fellow may participate on this board and give input on subjects that are designated for workshops and seminars.

A recent area of professional development is the Assistant Principals Program. Due to Fellow input, the SLC is now providing networking opportunities aimed particularly at those educators in the assistant principal level of school administration. These meetings afford an opportunity for professional development at all levels of leadership in sharing concerns, learning from others, and planning future programs. The program is open to all who serve as support administrators.

Data-Driven Decision Making and Action Research

In an effort to promote quality decision-making and active use of school performance data, the SLC maintains a fulltime Research Office. The Research Office provides several services, the most frequently used of which is the research brief. A research brief is a short literature review on any question or problem identified by a principal. In short, any principal may call the SLC and request a brief, and after a short dialogue designed to identify the researchable question at hand, SLC staff creates a document that includes an executive summary addressing the question, an annotated bibliography and copies of papers used to compile the brief. If the principal wishes to present the material from the brief to the faculty, the Research Office will prepare a workshop for a faculty meeting or a faculty in-service.

Connecting this research with the results of data obtained from testing, climate and culture surveys, and disaggregated student data is one of the activities at Summer Institute. The Research Office conducts a one and a

half day workshop during the week to examine three facets of data gathered from individual schools and to guide principals to use the data in formulating school improvement plans for the next year. Principals spend the afternoon of one day and the entire next day of Summer Institute intensively scrutinizing disaggregated student data and school climate and culture data to begin making school improvement plans. Three research statisticians are available to explain the meaning of the disaggregated student scores and how they can be used as well as the graphs and information from the surveys on climate and culture. They stressed that this is just a beginning since the real plans should be made at the meetings held throughout the year with their school leadership teams.

The Research Office also assists Fellows in conducting research projects, preparing summaries of school performance data, and otherwise connecting the schools to the services of partner universities. In cases where principals would like to evaluate programs that are already in use, the Research Office has assisted the participants in action research projects.

Instructional Focus

SLC began its focus on instruction during the first Summer Institute by providing presenters who exemplified best practices in instruction in their presentations to principals. This has continued over the years and has become an integral part in the planning process of any endeavor of the SLC. When workshops and seminars are planned, only presenters who use best practices in their method of presentation are invited to speak to the principals. However, the SLC has come to the realization that broader instructional focus is needed in the region. In an effort to promote regional academic focus, the SLC has hosted a regional Superintendent's Summit every year since 2003 to provide a unique opportunity for educational leaders of the five district region to join together for planning and sharing. The recognition that student issues do not stop at parish lines is crucial for continued growth. Since the first meeting, the superintendents have committed to making this summit an annual occurrence where they are able to assemble their staffs and collaborate in a regional approach to educational issues.

The Coaching Program instituted in the five district region is an outgrowth of the Superintendent's Summit. The Coaching Program is a new dimension in supervision of instruction which has seen remarkable results in other parts of the country. The SLC has pioneered the cooperation between the districts and the state, a factor that was necessary to introduce and apply the model to the New Orleans region. A national grant was secured to support this program which focuses directly on identifying student needs and student achievement. By administering this grant, the SLC hopes to further promote best practices not only to principals but also to the teachers they supervise.

Reflection

In addition to the sessions that are held each afternoon at the culmination of the day, principals are asked to reflect in writing at the end of the day, including what they have learned, what is still needed, or any thoughts that are significant to them. From these written reflections, several are chosen to share the next morning. Through this activity it is hoped that principals will realize the importance of reflection. The activity is continued throughout the year by the CEO through a weekly email reflection that he writes and shares with the Fellows. Reflections from the principals at Summer Institute have been published each year as *Visionary Voices* (Porter, 2004), and the weekly reflections of the CEO have been published under the title *Colleagues & Friends* (Riedlinger, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The professional development training provided by the SLC has evolved to its current state of intense best practices incorporating transformational and shared instructional leadership. Over the years, Fellows have identified their school needs and research has identified the best practices which address those needs. The SLC staff members believe that the emphasis on the best practices of building a shared vision, engaging in collaboration, fostering participative decision making, encouraging and providing professional development, making data-driven decisions, conducting action research, focusing on instruction and reflecting on practice will im-

prove schools and lead to increased student achievement. Indeed, every year the schools in which principals were SLC Fellows outperform the other schools in their district.

We hope the SLC will itself serve as a model for other regions to emulate and replicate to improve education for their students. The SLC is making a difference through the training in best practices of transformational and shared instructional leadership it provides to its Fellows and through the other programs it offers. They are developing leadership capacity and sustainability and providing regional networking at the top levels of educational administration in the region.

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Preparing Scholar-Practitioner Leaders: A Suggested Model of Best Practices for Dimensions of Change

Gary Clarke and Sandra Harris

Masters and doctoral programs in educational leadership are at a crossroads of change. Just as the Chinese proverb reminds us that “a journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step,” the journey to re-envision and rebuild leadership programs is in progress. Starratt (2004) has pointed out that in this re-structured setting, university professors are engaged in building a bridge between critical scholars and theorists to become “bridge scholars” charged with the task of closely critiquing the practice of teaching, learning, and the practice of leading schools (p. 265).

There are more leadership doctoral programs throughout the country and the world than ever before, which means that more students than ever are participating in this journey of continued lifelong formal learning. Nearly 200 of these are in educational leadership (see <http://www.alleducationschools.com>). Increasingly, the possession of an earned doctoral degree opens doors for enhanced professional opportunities for educators (Harris, 2005). In fact, Gerald and Hussar (2002) asserted that in many states a doctoral degree is the required benchmark for the superintendency, and by 2010 this benchmark of a doctoral degree is expected to extend to other district-level positions.

At the same time, today’s environment of school accountability is clearly evident at all levels of schooling from pre-school through the university level where university educator preparation programs are required to demonstrate success in passing credentialing exams (Levine, 2005; Milstein & Krueger, 1997; Murphy, 2002; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). This emphasis on accountability has contributed to the challenge to re-focus and re-design graduate leadership programs. In fact, Stein (2006) warned that if education schools are to remain relevant within today’s setting “they must approach the preparation of school leaders as part of an urgent social justice agenda” (p. 522).

Many new and revised older doctoral programs are scholar-practitioner programs in educational leadership. These are typically identified by certain components, such as emphasizing problem-based learning, using a cohort model, forging collaborative relationships with school districts, and including field-based internships (Jackson & Kelly, 2001; Murphy, 2002). But most importantly, today’s doctoral, scholar-practitioner programs have an emphasis on school improvement, democratic community, social justice and caring that encourage reflective practice, and continual growth. Therefore, the goal of scholar-practitioner graduate programs is transformative in nature, indicating that they are grounded in the study of the realities of leadership and are consistently engaging in inquiry. This suggests that learning is problem-based, and learners are “engaged in making meaning about their social world” (Anderson & Saavedra, 2003, p. 1).

Thus scholar-practitioner leader programs often connect individuals through a shared spirituality, centered on a values-driven practice that embodies reflection and relationships (Wheatley, 1999). Leadership programs that are based on these practices often support an authentic, empowering paradigm of leading and treating others in a manner that offers hope and encourages inspiration (Bolman & Deal, 2001; Thompson, 2005). This understanding of leadership is critical because as Peter Senge noted, “when we fail to tap the power of aspiration, deep learning and change are virtually impossible” (as cited in Spears, 2002, p. 349). Additionally, Stein (2006)

noted that instructional leadership grounded in organizational change is at “the heart of this agenda.” (p. 522). With this in mind, this paper reports the results of a study which explored the dimensions of change that occurred in changing paradigms of leadership among doctoral students in a program specifically designed to foster scholar-practitioner leaders.

METHODOLOGY

The design which guided this qualitative study utilized student reflective writing as the primary source of data. The student essay was a component of an unstructured classroom writing assignment. In a previous publication of the original essays (see Harris, 2005), student reflective writings were considered for ways that their practices were changing after being involved in a doctoral program. This study used those same essays, but focused instead on the dimensions of change that occurred.

Study Setting

The 16 doctoral students participating in this study had completed 24 hours of core doctoral classes and were enrolled at the time in a summer session that consisted of a field internship and a seminar synthesis class. Throughout previous coursework educational theories had been discussed that covered a wide expanse of learning emphasizing school improvement through the core values of the program’s framework of social justice, equity, caring, democracy, and community.

Class discussion also focused on the actual practice of education and often emphasized what education theories looked like when implemented on the school campus. In the beginning of the doctoral work, student class discussions tended to be either scholarly emphasizing theory or practical emphasizing what occurred in their daily lives in their schools.

As students became immersed in scholarly and practitioner readings, conversations began to integrate practice with theory. By the summer when students were assigned to write a synthesis paper, the dialogue was that of a scholar-practitioner, integrating practice and theory. The purpose of the synthesis paper was to explain their changing understandings of leadership and identify what this looked like in practice (Harris, 2005).

Population

Sixteen students participated in this study. Eight were male and eight were female, with ages that ranged from approximately 33 to 50. Nine students were principals or assistant principals, four students worked in a district-level capacity, and three were teachers. Twelve of the students lived and worked in a rural area in Texas, one lived and worked in a suburban city near a metropolitan area in Texas, and three students lived and worked in an urban area in Louisiana. All of the students were white, except for one African-American male.

Data Collection and Analysis

Doctoral students were asked to develop a 10–12 page synthesis paper that reflected their changing identity and practice. The following guiding questions provided the basis for the papers:

This is what I believed.

This is what my practice looked like then.

This is what I believe now.

This is what my practice looks like now.

This is who I want to become.

This is what I envision my practice looking like in the future.

Student papers were read for emerging themes using an open coding process as described by Creswell (1998). The original study findings identified four areas of changing practice for the students: struggling to increase personal capacity, recognizing a need for authenticity, enhancing sensitivity to others, and embracing the

unfinishedness of learning. For the purpose of this paper, common themes were categorized into dimensions of change that were reflected in the students' reported practices. In other words, the first study read the papers looking for understandings and behaviors that changed. This secondary reading of the papers explored the dimensions of change as they occurred. Careful attention, therefore, was given to note issues of how the students' changing leadership beliefs were described and how those beliefs were manifested in their subsequent changing practices.

FINDINGS

By describing critical incidents in their lives professionally and personally, four change dimensions emerged suggesting a cyclical model for understanding the dimensions of change, which lead to changed practices. These changing practices resulted in students becoming more equipped to lead school improvement. The four dimensions of change that emerged were:

Change is motivated by a shared human spirituality of hope that we can influence expected outcomes;
 Change is an individual growth process of scholarship, reflection, and reconstructed practice based on a system of core values;
 Change is a function of our behavior towards others; and,
 Change is a continuous dialogue between ourselves and our practice that is never finished.

Subsequently, these dimensions of change led to a second order of emergent dialogical changes, which were categorized as: conceptual-motivational, applied-methodological, and personal-renewal. Using the term "dialogical" communicated the multiple, on-going exchanges between all domains and themes as the leader grows and changes.

Change as a Shared Spirituality of Hope

The student writings revealed a shared belief that leaders and leadership can make a difference in educational outcomes. Several expressed this in a manner that implied a hope for positive, future changes in their workplaces as a result of their studies in the program. Many felt that their participation in the doctoral program had empowered them in a new and significant way. As one student wrote, "I am now able to ground my experiences and values . . . in proven research. . . . This grounded network will make possible many years of growth. . . . which will ensure future successful generations to follow" (Faris, 2005, p. 81–82).

The shared nature of this belief in a renewed sense of hope for improved student outcomes reflects the unique nature of the human race. This nature distinguishes us from other species in that we understand our own temporality. As a result, we possess the motivation, through our shared human spirituality, to creatively "intervene in reality in order to change it" (Freire, 1976, p. 4). As these doctoral students acquired new knowledge, it was obvious from their writings that they believed this knowledge was transformational in nature (Durham, 2005):

This [program] has led to a deeper understanding of the concepts and ideals that not only shape academic minds, but also shape true and responsible heart. . . . I am . . . entrusted with the keys that will help lead these children to successful and productive futures. One day the students of today will become the key holders for others. (p. 122–123)

The transformational nature of the change process occurring in these students was reflected in their expressed beliefs that leadership can change the world and leaders must believe this passionately. As one student wrote, "we have a responsibility to help create students who are dreamers of possible utopias" (N. Wellman, 2005, p. 125).

Change as an Individual Process

Several of the students writing in Harris (2005) expressed "doubts and uncertainties" (Vickers, 2005, p. 104), at being successful in a doctoral leadership program. They also voiced fears that they could not bring about

school improvement. Yet, despite their “feeling very small,” (Hebert, 2005, p. 99), their desire to continue learning, to expand their experiences, to bring more “significance to their life” (Vaszauskas, 2005, p. 55), they persevered in the program. That perseverance resulted in significant individual changes. As one student noted, “[through] my studies, ongoing dialogue. . . . reflection, and my own leadership practice, I have developed a wider conception of morality” (Ninness, 2005, p. 84).

They also persevered in attempting to bring change to their schools. In this way they realized that their personal capacity for learning, for new experiences, and for influencing schools was growing far greater than they had imagined. As one student pointed out (Wellman, 2005):

Little did I comprehend that much of my foundational knowledge and practice would be challenged, scrutinized, criticized, analyzed, and publicized, only to be reconstructed into a deeper search for meaning, self-analysis, and a renewed sense of destiny. (p. 124)

Students noted that despite the direction from readings, professors and on-going dialogue they had to “take a stand based on [their] own perception of these beliefs and values” (Clarke, 2005, p. 13). This required a highly personalized, recursive process that was built upon reflective learning. Through building relationships with other cohort members and through growing understandings of the power of dialogue and reflection, their capacity for learning increased. As their learning capacity increased, so too, did their potential for impacting student outcomes. The ability to become a transformational leader was inherent in this change process. As one student noted, “What I was learning was changing my career and helping my school to improve in many ways” (Bass, 2005, p. 51).

Change as Behavior towards Others

The students’ writings exemplified a belief that leadership is inherently a public act that operates in a social context. For leadership to have substance, it must influence others to change their own behaviors in ways that enable more positive outcomes for students. One student expressed this behavior as, “Contextually, all positive changes imply significant changes in what happens with students, in each classroom, in every school. Regardless of what changes [leaders] plan and implement, teachers change students, not policies” (Clarke, 2005, p. 15).

More personally, the students’ expressed an overwhelmingly positive view that leaders’ actions toward and with others in their organizations could change the learning culture of those organizations. These actions towards others centered on developing relationships of trust and commitment within their organizations. For example, Patterson (2005) wrote, “Our focus was on developing trust. By enhancing a culture of trust, we felt as though we could develop the relationships necessary to foundationally support change projects in the future” (p. 33).

In talking about their behavior towards others, nearly every student emphasized an almost spiritual zeal to build better, stronger, more caring relationships with others of all ages and all backgrounds. As one student wrote, “I must uncover the distortions that exist in our language and our view of the world. . . . If I am truly committed to children then I must critique the present order and I must believe that change is possible” (Neal, 2005, p. 26).

Change as Continuous, Unfinished Dialogue

Embedded within the students’ stories was an emergent idea of continuous learning and growth as scholars and practitioners. A student wrote in support of this, “I am an unfinished piece of work and know that my evolution is a never-ending progression” (Daniel, 2005, p. 132). This very process of identifying that they would always be unfinished, served as a catalyst to continue learning, to continue looking for ways to improve schools for all students.

By viewing change as a continuous process, the students were embracing the concept of lifelong learning. As educational leaders, they understood that change was inevitable and necessary to meet the needs of their ever changing students and staffs. As one student wrote eloquently “I reflected on the person that I was and I know

that I will never be that person again. I question the person that I am right now” (Mahfouz-Jordan, 2005, p. 10). This constantly points leaders to look ahead with eagerness and excitement to what the future holds as they “chisel out” (Vickers, 2005, p. 109) a vision that encompasses all learners.

Finally, this process of continually growing and changing as leaders, and yet, always remaining in Freire’s (1998) state of “unfinishedness” (p. 21), implies a continuous dialogue between the leader and their practice, as well as with themselves. This dialogue provides the impetus for leaders to reflect and reconstruct their practice to meet new challenges. A student referred to this process as follows, “I am challenged to learn more and to apply that knowledge to my practice while constantly reevaluating the results of my practice” (Young, 2005, p. 68).

Emergent Dialogical Change Themes

The struggle for increased personal capacity for shared human spirituality, individual growth, our behavior toward others, and this unfinished dialogue resulted in a deeper dialogue or dialogic model, if you will, of a changing dynamic understanding of a student’s own potential capacity to learn more and do more as a change leader. This model of change dimensions was broadly categorized as (1) conceptual–motivational, (2) applied–methodological, and (3) personal–renewal. These three themes contribute to the uniquely personal framework (see figure 2) that learning can and does alter the learner and has the capacity to influence the leadership outcomes of the community or culture.

Conceptual-Motivational Change Themes

Conceptual-motivational changes are those dimensions that now motivate my behavior; in other words—this is what I believe in. As the student writings were coded and analyzed, the themes of spirituality, caring, democracy, and equity emerged as providing a framework of motivation for the students. A number cited a desire to create schools that were more spiritual, more democratic, more caring, and more equitable as their primary motivation as a leader. The concept of spirituality emerged as a foundational theme of shared human endeavors, rather than being conceived of in a religious context. Examples of conceptual-motivational change themes, as expressed by the students’ writings in this area, are expressed below:

Spirituality—“The web of interconnectedness present. . .in the profound realities of life. . .the realization of destiny . . . that recognizes a power greater than one’s own . . . [while] comprehending an empowering challenge to achieve one’s potential.” (W. Wellman, 2005, p. 144)

Caring—“As in the butterfly effect, the small, individual acts of caring may not always seem to produce immediate visible results, but over time and collectively they produce powerful results.” (N. Wellman, p. 129)

Democracy—“My beliefs evolved quickly into an understanding that those changes had more potential for a lasting and positive impact if they occurred in the context of promoting democratic values.” (Clarke, 2005, p. 14)

Equity—“A question that I must face now and in the future becomes: How can I establish an environment in my school that facilitates every person being given an equitable, fair, respectful, and just opportunity to achieve, with pride, his/her greatest potential?” (W. Wellman, 2005, p. 143)

Applied-Methodological Change Themes

Applied-methodological change dimensions are the practical actions, which are my behavior—this is what I now do as a result of applying my beliefs to my behavior. The specific behaviors that emerged from the student writings were educational grace, reflection, relationships, and empowerment. These behaviors often described how students treated others, but also were indicative of highly personal, inward-directed behavior. The concept of educational grace was used by students to describe a method of treating students equitably regardless of how they behaved or performed. The leaders believed that an obligation of care extends to students that is not dependent on whether those students are high or low achieving, high SES or low SES. Further, that educational

grace is extended to all regardless of the merit of the student. Nothing needed to be done to earn or deserve this treatment. Examples of applied-motivational change themes from the student writings included:

Educational Grace—“If I establish goals that extend grace to help others, I will make a significant, shared contribution to their success. When students come to my office, I now view them as unfinished projects that do not have to earn my help. I will use educational grace as I assist them along the journey. To be successful in this profession and as a human being, all I need to do is be significant by helping our students. If I am significant, I will be successful.” (Vaszaukas, 2005, p. 64)

Reflection—“Reflection enables our potential to critique and grow in our practice. Reflection enables us to free ourselves from the mistakes of our past. By enabling reflection in others we are enabling their potential for freedom as well.” (Clarke, 2005, p. 16)

Relationships—“When leaders arrive at the point of understanding that relationships are the key in leading others in schools, they become teacher-leaders, teaching others their own essence. By thus modeling the essence of our profession in our own practice, we become leaders who teach the hearts of other leaders to teach other’s hearts as well.” (Clarke, 2005, p. 18)

Empowerment—“Through supporting and encouraging teachers, educational leadership can provide the crucial awareness that an individual can impact and promote the success of the organization. A single person can make the difference. By modeling successful strategies and providing the resources needed, teachers can become empowered beyond expectation.” (Faris, 2005, p. 80)

Personal-Renewal Change Themes

Personal-renewal change dimensions are the deeply personal, enhanced behaviors that occur as I learn—in other words, this is how I grow. The specific behaviors that emerged were acting authentically with great courage to help create a new culture or sense of community within their educational practices. The students described the need for a personal, reflective focus on their practices and beliefs that would stir others to commitment because of the trust that was developed within the school or organization. Throughout their descriptions of these change events, the possibility emerged that students and staff might experience a personal renewal for better outcomes in their schools. Examples of change themes in this area:

Authenticity—“An authentic leader looks at self or self introspectively, examines their ability to provide honest and constant feedback to others, to foster diversity, to nurture teamwork and collaboration, and to acknowledge and encourage informal networks among others. But, the test of authenticity comes down to a simple question: Are these leaders walking their talk?” (Daniel, 2005, p. 136)

Courage—“If I am to truly be transformed into a scholar-practitioner leader, I must have the political and moral courage that works to empower followers to be leaders. I must not be afraid to speak against rules and regulations that will harm children and the community.” (Neal, 2005, pp. 26–27)

Creating a Sense of Community and Shared Culture—“I must become an invitational leader . . . to create a community that evokes a shared commitment to inviting all children to the table of education . . .” (Durham, 2005, p. 114)

Hope—“These words speak the true essence of why I teach: because I care to share knowledge . . . because I care to continue learning. . .because I care to share my hope for the future, one that is imbued with caring teachers, students, and communities.” (Schultz, 2005, p. 46)

As these dialogical change themes emerged from the context of the students’ reflections of their personal dimensions of change, the interactive relatedness of these concepts and methods became clearer and their cyclical nature was observed. The students’ highly individualized, reflective writings were vividly descriptive of the conceptual framework that guided the doctoral program. Further, this framework, as it was understood and internalized by the students, had changed the cohort collectively, and altered their personal and professional leadership practices. These changes had then positively influenced student outcomes within each of the leaders’ workplaces.

The powerful conceptual-motivational beliefs resulted in shared spirituality, caring, democracy, and equity providing a powerful and directive motivation for the doctoral students to alter their practices in ways that resulted in changed practices. As the dimensions of change moved to the applied-methodological exemplars of educational grace, reflection, relationship building, and empowerment within their practice, the doctoral students demonstrated an ability to alter the expected outcomes for their own students. This led to a deeper dimension of change revealed in a personal growth renewal that was authentic, courageous and created a uniquely hopeful community of learning. Through this powerful, cyclical conceptual framework of changing leadership, using emergent belief systems as motivation and newly learned applied behaviors as their method, these doctoral students had learned how to reconstruct hopeful practices and therefore renew hope in the lives of their staffs, students, and schools.

CONCLUSION

Doctoral students in this scholar-practitioner program described the changes that occurred in their lives centered on four dimensions (figure 1) that suggest best practice. These cyclical change dimensions reinforced that change is motivated by our beliefs and that through our shared human spirituality leaders can influence and alter expected outcomes; that change is an individual growth process of scholarship, reflection, and reconstructed practice centered around a system of core beliefs; that change is a function of our behavior towards others; and, that change is a continuous dialogue between ourselves and our practice that is never finished.

Additionally, these dimensions of change were exemplified through a number of deeper dialogical change themes (figure 2) that unfolded from a framework of conceptual-motivational beliefs such as spirituality, caring, democracy and equity. The dialogical change themes emerged as applied-methodological behaviors, such as educational grace, reflection, relationships, and empowerment and were bound together by conceptual-motivational beliefs in a uniquely applied personal renewal framework that embodied an authentic, courageous leadership. Finally, these change beliefs and behaviors operated within the students' educational communities and cultures to influence and alter the expected outcomes. Within these settings and embedded in the doctoral students' emerging practices, hope emerged in the process for continually reconstructing and renewing the educational practice.

The cyclical change paradigm demonstrated in these student essays combined scholarly knowledge and inquiry with leadership practice in a manner that positively impacted student outcomes and changed the leaders'

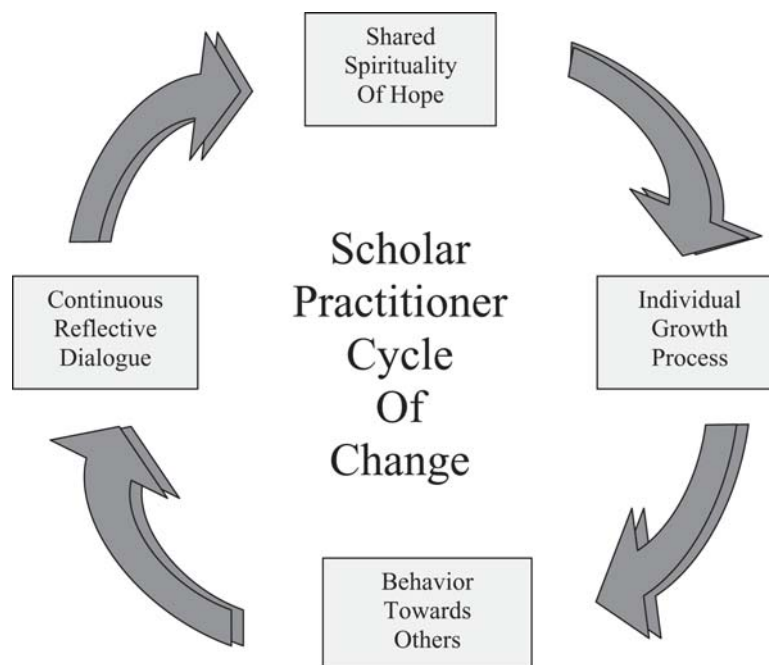


Figure 1. Dimensions of Cyclical Change in Scholar-Practitioner Leadership Program.

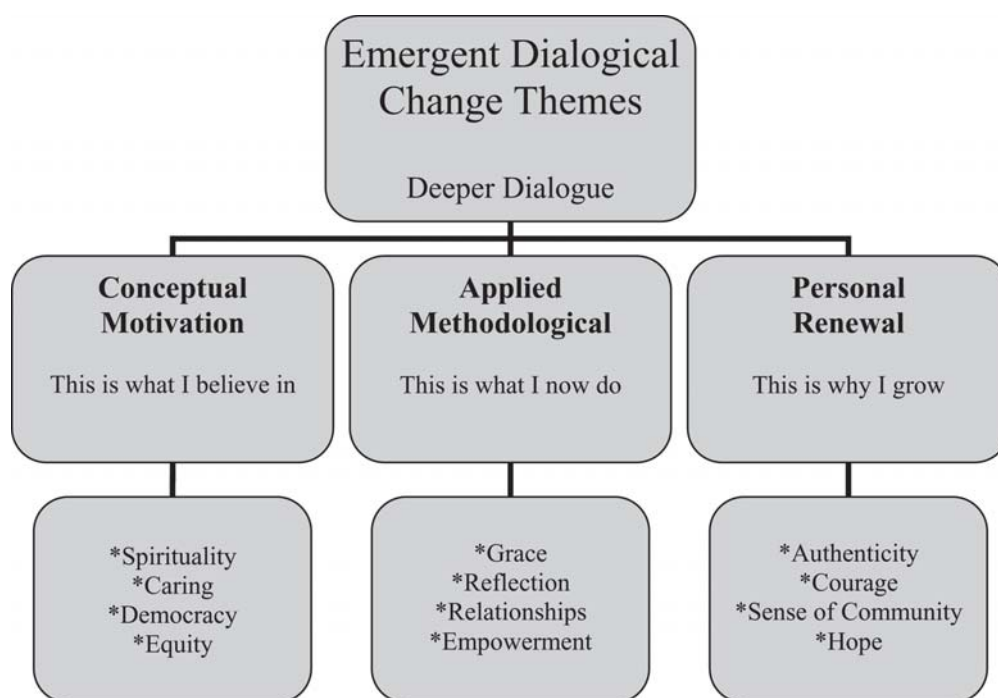


Figure 2. A Model for Emergent Dialogical Change Themes in a Scholar-Practitioner Program.

practices, which suggests that this model of change dimension is a best practice for change. The scholar-practitioner preparation program for these leaders fostered reflective, reconstructed practices that embodied a shared spirituality of hope and connectiveness across their educational relationships. By exemplifying authenticity and empowering others, these leaders offered a renewed hope and inspired their educational communities.

Notably, the 16 students who participated in this study indicated that their passions for becoming educators were renewed, a critical component for best practices. They described their newly clarified education goals in words that resonated with future promise or as one student wrote, “My ‘commandment’ was clear: Lead children to the Promised Land” (Vickers, 2005, p. 112). Finally, by collectively and individually constructing their emergent conceptual framework of their changing leadership practice, students had created a paradigm of hope for themselves and for their own students in the present as well as the future. This paradigm speaks of the eloquent beauty and motivation of education’s shared spirituality working through the methodology of educational grace in providing renewed hope for all students.

Hoyle (2002) emphasized the importance of developing this spiritual dimension when he wrote “Without a spiritual side, a leader lacks depth in understanding human motives and can destroy organizations and innocent lives” (p. 18). He continued by saying, “Gifted leaders today recognize that the functions and strategies of leadership fall short without the spiritual side” (p. 18). Developing a spirituality of hope is a powerful force that guides leadership students to “help one child who might otherwise have no hope by caring deeply, what a marvelous and miraculous gift . . . for both of us” (N. Wellman, 2005, p. 130). Ultimately, hope is an agent of our humanity, a symbol of our unique spirituality that enables us to look past our present circumstances and individual attributes in order to envision alternative outcomes and unbounded possibilities. True leaders are enablers of hope in others, thereby empowering opportunities for best practices on our campuses.

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Cultural Proficiency: A Moral Imperative for Educational Administration?

Richard A. Gregory and Carl L. Hoffmeyer

After 35 years in K–12 education and a number of years teaching Education Administration students, the authors are convinced that we must move with all focus and speed to train our educational leaders in the principles and behaviors of the culturally proficient leader (Lindsey, et.al. 2003, 2005). We can no longer pay lip service to the vision and mission statements that promise “learning for all!” Our individual values and behaviors and organizational policies and practices, can either have a positive learning experience for those we educate or negatively impact and impair the learning experiences for portions of our community children.

Since 1983 and the *Nation at Risk* report, we have tested our students unrelentingly, hoping to convince all stakeholders and the world that accountability is only through high-stakes testing. We are currently involved in another well-intentioned yet poorly conceived assessment system, mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. If we truly understood the cultural diversity in our schools today and throughout the global community, we would insist on another approach. As noted cultural and diversity scholars (Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2004; Lindsey, et.al. 2003, 2005; Schein, 1993) suggest, we would gain more traction in student achievement by paying attention to the cultural diversity present in our classrooms across America.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, if nothing else, exposed the travesty of national/state assessments and masking of the learning levels of our poor, limited English, disabled, and minority students. While many school districts have for years disaggregated student achievement data, the only report data that surfaced in the media was that of grade levels, schools, SAT, ACT, and other merit scholarship reports. Underneath that facade of learning for all, huge numbers of children were falling farther behind. The achievement gap, narrowing up to 1988, has been widening and increasing (D’Amico, 2001) as greater numbers of our children become disenfranchised from acquiring the American Dream.

To be fair, public schooling in America has accomplished what no other nation on earth has done. We do care about all children and their learning, very deeply! it is not known how to impact that bottom quartile. It is like the philosopher who stated that it is no one’s fault, and it is everybody’s fault. The authors would make the point clearer. The issue is about culturally competent leadership in our schools. Without this inside-out analysis of our cultural beliefs and assumptions, we can never hope to understand what is happening in the diverse environment of most classrooms today.

Unfortunately, most of us involved in community educational experiences have not been given the tools to work within this highly diverse environment that we face each day in the workplace. We have all had the requisite college or university training in multicultural or diversity education in order to satisfy the Board of Regents or state mandate for diversity training. Most of this instruction was delivered from the dominant culture point-of-view and was focused on learning about those who are different from us. We learned about the nature of diversity, perhaps studied a few cultures or ethnic groups, depending on the course content and focus. And then we graduated, received our credential to teach or administer, and headed off to our new job.

As we entered the school or classroom, we became aware that our unquestioned assumptions (Schein, 1985) about culture, race, and ethnicity were inadequate to explain the diversity present. We could not remember

much about the nature of diversity or the cultures we studied as a requirement for our education degree. If only we had some tools or some framework to help manage and respond to the learning environment as shaped by its diversity (Lindsey, et.al. 2003). The good news today is that training and tools are available to assist individuals and organizations meet the challenges of the diverse culture.

THE BEGININGS OF CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

The process/model of Cultural Proficiency (Lindsey, et.al. 2003, 2005) as adapted from the Cross (1989) cultural competence model is becoming more popular with schools and organizations searching for methods to respond to cultural diversity and the widening achievement gap. Randall Lindsey and colleagues with the Cultural Proficiency Group (2003) adapted the Cross (1989) model to schools and other community organizations as a process to address the differences in schools. The focus is on behaviors, practices, and policies that can be applied to both the individual and the organization.

The Cultural Proficiency process is notably different from most diversity or multicultural training programs currently being used in diverse environments. The typical diversity training begins with learning about the nature of diversity and then to more in-depth studies of race or ethnicity. Perhaps some additional elements are added such as language or culture. However, the course or training focus is normally on THEM, the people who are different than the dominant culture (Lindsey et.al, 2003).

Cultural Proficiency is an inside-out approach that begins with the individual or organization examining their behaviors, practices, policies, and belief system. It is not an off-the-shelf program with quick fixes and recipes for success. If becoming culturally proficient were easy, we would all be proficient. Further, Cultural Proficiency will look different in each environment, as individuals and organizations apply the tools and measure their success along the continuum of proficiency. Simply stated, cultural competence is behavior that is aligned with standards designed to gain cultural proficiency. Randall Lindsey and colleagues have identified four tools for developing individual and organizational cultural competence.

FOUR TOOLS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The Guiding Principles: Underlying values of the approach.

The Continuum: Provides terms that identify productive and non-productive policies, practices, and behaviors.

The Essential Elements: Five identified standards measuring growth to proficiency along the continuum.

The Barriers: Three caveats in resistance to change: (1) presumption of entitlement, (2) unawareness of the need to adapt, and (3) systems of oppression.

While it is not possible to acquire complete understanding of cultural proficiency tools within this brief paper, an informative, specific discussion of key concepts will be instructive. Based on the authors' prior experiences of teaching faculty seminars and graduate level coursework on Cultural Proficiency, it is appropriate to begin with the guiding principles.

The Guiding Principles

Randall Lindsey and colleagues have consulted with hundreds of organizations, including numerous school districts over the past 15+ years. In his work with schools he usually finds that the mission, vision, and core values statements normally satisfy external requirements rather than guide and give purpose to the real work of the school or district (Lindsey, Roberts, Campbell Jones, 2005). School leaders can, through internalizing and deeply understanding of the five guiding principles, become culturally proficient leaders for change.

The five guiding principles are summarized here, but obviously require considerable exploration in order to gain full understanding:

1. Culture is a predominant force; everyone is influenced by culture
2. People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture

3. People have both group identities and individual identities
4. Diversity within cultures is important; cultural groups are neither homogeneous nor monolithic
5. Each individual and each group has unique cultural needs and values

The guiding principles, through deeper understanding, become the doorway to greater awareness of the need to question our beliefs and adapt when necessary. As Schein (1993) reminds the organizational leader, if they are not conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural analysis is especially valuable for dealing with aspects of organizations that seem irrational, frustrating, and intractable (Schein, 1993).

THE CONTINUUM

The cultural proficiency continuum, as adapted by Lindsey, et.al. (2003), has six points arrayed along the horizontal plane. At each point of the continuum (Figure 1, Appendix 1) the individual or organization will encounter terms, policies, behaviors, and practices that either respond positively or negatively to the environment as shaped by diversity.

At the first point on the continuum, the practices and behaviors almost seem obvious, even to one who is not familiar with the terms. Individuals and organizations that see the difference but eliminate the culture of others, who are different, exemplify cultural destructiveness. Some extreme examples of this behavior are enslaving the African people, westward expansion of the United States impacting the First Nations people, ethnic cleansings, and holocausts. The most obvious exemplars of destructiveness today include: English only policies, dress policies targeting ethnic groups, and tracking and segregation programs.

The second point on the continuum, cultural incapacity, is characterized by extreme bias and the belief of superiority by the dominant group. Because of the disempowerment of the minority group, Lindsey and others believe this situation leads to a “learned helplessness.” (Lindsey, et.al. 2003) At this stage, people feel powerless to change, and a feeling of hopelessness is pervasive. This situation is precisely what retired General Colin Powell was addressing in his attempted empowerment of African American youth, prior to his appointment as Secretary of State in the Bush administration. Past and current examples of cultural incapacity include the Oriental Exclusion Acts, Jim Crow laws, hiring practices, tokenism, and not holding accountability for members of minority groups.

Continuing on to the third point of the continuum, cultural blindness, individuals and organizations see the difference but behave as though they do not see the difference. Similar to many diversity programs, the belief is that race and culture have no differences and everyone is treated equally. While this sounds equitable and well intentioned, by not dealing with the dynamics of difference, we create additional problems for people who are different. The dominant group applies the values and beliefs of their culture as if they were universal and beneficial to all. In fact, some culturally blind educators may view students’ cultural differences as indications of disobedience or non-compliance (Lindsey, et.al, 2003). Two obvious examples of this blindness are teaching that Abraham Lincoln is a hero to all African Americans, and Cinco de Mayo is a holiday for all Spanish-speaking countries.

There is considerable evidence today that many educational organizations and individuals occupy much of the space at this third point in the continuum. There is such an emphasis to avoid discrimination that the differences are overlooked and minority groups are further disempowered. This “cultural blindness” stunts our growth and disallows our opportunity to progress to the fourth point on the continuum, cultural precompetence. Our schools and educators have been so acculturated to the sensitivity and tolerance for diversity issues; we become unable to transform the institution for true equity.

The organizations and individual must reach the “tipping point” on the continuum where a shift in thinking occurs. This shift turns our attention from the behavior and motivation of others, to an introspective look at our own behaviors and beliefs (Lindsey, et.al. 2005). Individuals and organizations can escape the “paralysis of cultural blindness” and move on to the precompetence point on the continuum (Lindsey, et.al. 2005).

During precompetence thinking and behaving, people see the differences more clearly, but still respond inadequately to the diverse environment. Perhaps for the first time, individuals and organizations become aware of their limitations in intercultural interactions. There is, however, an active engagement with cultures other than

their own culture. While all sorts of single cultural goal orientations are evident at this point, the response to the diverse environment is still lacking. Some examples of this stage include international food fairs, Cinco de Mayo Day, celebration of Black History month and so forth.

On the last two points of the continuum, individuals and organizations begin exhibiting practices and behaviors that exemplify cultural competence and finally, cultural proficiency. The attention to the dynamics of difference and continual assessment of their own cultural beliefs and knowledge are evident. The system and individuals begin to adapt their practices and beliefs to accommodate this changing environment that is being shaped by its diversity. According to Lindsey, et.al. (2003, 2005) culturally competent educators incorporate culturally appropriate behavior in performance appraisals and advocate and speak on issues of underrepresented groups such as race, class, ethnicity, disabled, sexual orientation, religious, age or gender.

Cultural proficiency is more than the esteeming and respecting of culture (Lindsey, et.al. 2003). At this point in the development, people and organizations know how to learn about other cultures and can function effectively in other cultures. As some individuals do, they may learn another language or live in another culture for a period of time. Culturally proficient educators also add to the knowledge base of effective practices through research and new approaches (Lindsey, et.al. 2003).

Of course, with any model or process of learning new practice or theory, standards and guiding principles or values must be present to ensure deeper learning. The continuum of terms and the discussion of productive and non-productive behaviors require more than just a cosmetic view along the continuum. The third tool, essential elements, provides another tool to further explore beliefs, values, practices, behaviors, and policies to achieve cultural competence and proficiency for individuals and schools.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

According to Lindsey et.al. (2003, 2005) this tool provides behavioral markers or standards that address the issues that emerge in the diverse environment. The behavioral markers enhance the development of curricular standards for learners and performance standards for employees. A brief discussion of the essential elements is critical to understanding how the final two points on the continuum are realized and achieved.

The five elements that become the standards of development are: (1) naming the differences through the assessment of culture, (2) learning to value diversity by claiming the differences, (3) managing the dynamics of difference by training people how to deal with conflict, (4) adapting to diversity by training for differences, and, (5) institutionalizing and integrating cultural knowledge by actually making changes for the differences. It is within these standards that individuals and organizations learn to celebrate and train for diversity, understand the historic distrust present through studies of poverty and racism (Ogbu & Simons, 1998), develop skills for cross-cultural communication, and become aware of how one's own culture may offend and disempower another cultural group. Application of the standards (elements), along with the guiding principles, provides the substance that is lacking in many diversity-training programs.

THE BARRIERS

Given our educational preparation from the dominant culture point of view, most of us are completely unaware of the barriers to cultural competence. Cultural Proficiency teaches that there are barriers impairing understanding our personal beliefs about other groups. The presumption of entitlement and privilege are often taken for granted by members of the dominant group. They believe that all benefits and achievements have been gained through their character or merit, with little or no effect due to dominant positioning in the culture.

According to Lindsey (2005) most organizations are systems of institutionalized racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism. These systems are supported and sustained without the permission and knowledge of the people they benefit. Domination of individuals and groups is perpetuated through the systems of oppression present in the organization.

Lindsey, et.al. (2005) believes that in order to make the shift from cultural precompetence to culturally competent is to recognize the dynamics of entitlement and privilege and how schools contribute to the disparities in achievement. The culturally competent behavior then is having the will to be ethical and make the moral choices that reflect this new understanding. Hence, the call by Lindsey and colleagues to call for a moral imperative on

the part of educational leaders to transform the system for equity. A moral imperative to make our communities and our world a place where justice and harmony are the norms (Lindsey et.al. 2003, 2005).

A BRIEF COMPARISON OF SELECTED MULTICULTURAL/DIVERSITY MODELS

As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the additional works of Nieto (2004) and Banks (2004) are informative works done by highly respected multicultural scholars. While each approach is different and uses different terms, each has a very similar outcome: the desire to move people from a monoculture belief system to a cross-cultural system of literacy or proficiency.

All three models, Lindsey et.al. (2005), Nieto (2004) and Banks (2004) have stages of development, beginning with a lack of awareness of the moral urgency and ending with an affirmation of multicultural competence or proficiency. In addition, each of the three models addresses individual attitudes, behaviors, and practices and to a varying degree, how the organization and the educational system is impacted at specific stages/levels or points.

Nieto (2004) proposed a multicultural model that has five levels of multicultural education: monocultural education, tolerance, acceptance, respect and affirmation, solidarity, and critique. Each level is examined through the seven characteristics of multicultural education: antiracist/discriminatory, basic, pervasive, important for all students, education for social justice, process, and critical pedagogy. For example, if all levels and characteristics were arrayed in a 5 × 7 theoretical matrix, the level of acceptance would reflect basic characteristics through a diversity of lifestyles and values other than just those of the dominant group. Further, Nieto (2004) acknowledged that cultural components include the same density as Lindsey et.al. (2005). According to Nieto (2003), multicultural education needs to be about much more than ethnic tidbits and cultural sensitivity.

The Banks (2001, 2004) model is a typology addressing the six stages of cultural development: cultural psychology captivity, cultural encapsulation, cultural identity clarification, biculturalism, multiculturalism and reflective nationalism, and globalism and global competency. The model focuses primarily on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and to some extent, religion, and culture. Through cultural development at each stage, students clarify cultural, national, and global identifications. Students move from exposure to own culture (Stage 1); to clarifying attitudes and cultural identity (Stage 3); to an ability to function within cultures globally through reflective and clarified national and global identifications (Stage 6).

The authors believe all three models have much to offer organizations and individuals interested in gaining an understanding of working with the diverse cultures of the 21st century. However, the Cultural Proficiency model as adapted for schools by Lindsey et.al. (2003, 2005) holds great promise for schools of the future. It begins with an inside-out process, which forces the participants to question their assumptions/beliefs held not only about their culture, but the cultures of those who are different from them. Moreover, it is not an off-the-shelf program and will look different in every organization. What will remain firm are the essential elements and the guiding principles of Cultural Proficiency. These are the lenses by which individuals and organizations examine the continuum and determine their journey along the continuum to Cultural Proficiency.

CULTURALLY PROFICIENT (CP) INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Application of the Cultural Proficiency tools to the Educational Leadership program is critical to the concept that we espouse: Leaders of leaders. A required course of study in the Educational Leadership program at this university is Instructional Leadership Development (ILD). It is appropriate to discuss the application of CP to the ILD model because this training, either at the university or regional service center, is a state requirement for all administrators. ILD is the philosophical underpinnings for the appraisal system in Texas. All administrators certified in Texas since 2000 must take ILD. Administrators that were certified prior to that time are required to attend a sixteen hour training titled *ILT to ILD: Moving Texas Forward*. This philosophical construct is grounded in the effective schools model espoused by Ron Edmonds and Larry Lezotte, and contains a model that revolves around quality student performance (Texas Education Agency, 2005). The foundation of this model is the understanding of culture, ethics, and integrity as they apply to student performance.

The importance of capturing the principal candidate's reflections on the concept of CP as it overlays the ILD model can show the applicability of the tools in the minds of our students at this university. Graduate students in

the educational leadership program were asked to utilize a reflective paper format to describe the applicability of the CP tools to the ILD model. The following anecdotal comments are taken from those reflective papers.

Student A focuses on a shift in the instructional strategy focus that is highlighted in the ILD training. “I will address only a small portion of the ILD and that is ‘A Shift in Teaching and Learning for Texas.’ This shift is going to totally revamp the “old school culture.” One of the main changes that teachers will have to make is ‘Student differences are studied as a basis for planning.’ If teachers are traveling down the cultural continuum and are at least approaching the tipping point, they will be able to assess these students and their differences by looking at their cultures.”

Student B begins the discussion by linking CP and the ILD Framework, focusing on culture and ethics/integrity.

Cultural Proficiency requires us as future leaders to start with ourselves and see our own beliefs. This is the start of the inside-out approach. It focuses leaders to look at the insiders of the school and encourages them to reflect on their own values. Most of the diversity ‘groups and courses; requires you to learn about other people, not themselves. The leader must remember that cultural proficiency is not an off the shelf program. It requires informed and dedicated faculty, staff and leadership.

When considering whether or not to participate as a committee member to plan the “culture of the month” activity, Student C responded with the following:

I carefully weighed my options. I decided that participating in the committee would be a battle I could not win this year without negatively affecting my students and my education. Cultural Proficiency is so ingrained in me that if I can’t do the job right, I don’t want to do the job. It’s not fair to the kids. Therefore, I have chosen to not participate on the committee or the activities. I would be untrue to myself and the progress I have made in becoming a better human being. If my principal asks why I am not participating, I will tell her why. That will let me know that she is interested in hearing what I have to say, and, at that time, I can share some of my Cultural Proficiency knowledge, knowing I will be heard.

Student D links the philosophy of the framework and CP together. “The culturally proficient continuum establishes a foundation and standards that educational leaders can utilize to personally and professionally reflect on goals and visions. Aligning the cultural proficient tools and principles with the ILD framework, will create a learning environment where ALL students and staff members are valued and involved in the learning process.”

THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION KNOWLEDGE BASE (KB) AND CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

Unfortunately, most school and central office administrators, unless they are recent graduates, have not been exposed to the work of Lindsey et.al. (2003, 2005), Nieto (2004) or Banks (2004). Given the current national dialogue regarding the Knowledge Base (KB) in Educational Administration, our universities would be well advised to spend more time in ensuring adequate coverage of cultural diversity training that is more than a survey course on the nature of diversity. As Achilles (2005) reminds us, until we know and use the KB related to school outcomes, we cannot expect educational excellence to happen. If educational administrators do not know or use best practice in preparing culturally proficient leaders, who will guide the instructional faculty in our schools?

DATA COLLECTION ON CULTURAL PROFICIENCY RECEPTIVITY

Using the Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale (Lindsey, et.al. 2005, p. 10–14), we have asked principal candidates and public school teachers to respond to the 15 questions within the instrument. Each question is scored with a 7-point Likert Scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) with a total scale score of 105. While Lindsey states that this scale is not a scientific instrument, we are finding that it provides strong initial data on how students and teachers feel toward being culturally competent.

We have also used the instrument with principal candidates enrolled in *Cultural Proficiency for Leaders*, an elective in our program at The University of Texas-Permian Basin. During fall semester of 2005, 24 students completed the Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale at the opening class session and during the ending session

of the semester. Students were exposed to the tools of the Cultural Proficiency model throughout the semester. Means and standard deviations of pre and post training were computed and the differences between the means were analyzed using the t test for correlated samples. The mean and standard deviation on the pre score was 85.29 and 8.86 respectively. The mean and standard deviation on the post score was 93.66 and 6.91. The standard deviation had decreased while the mean increased 8.37 points with the post score analysis, yielding a significant difference in the means, $p < .01$.

We intend to repeat the t test with each Cultural Proficiency class for the next three semesters, and then analyze all groups with an ANOVA at the appropriate time. Based on our initial data, we predict that instructing our principal candidates in the Cultural Proficiency approach and training our teachers in the tools of the process will yield positive impact on student learning for all groups of students.

THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

Working with Lindsey and colleagues, school districts have used the essential elements (standards) as leverage points for transformative change in their schools. (Lindsey, et.al. 2005) They realize that the student achievement gap will not lessen without inclusive curricula and sincere efforts to fix the historic distrust problem (Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Obiafor, 2001). The leaders and school boards of these districts have made the ethical and moral decisions to truly serve all kids rather than pay lip service found in most mission statements. This is the kind of moral, leadership imperative expected of the cultural proficient leader.

APPENDIX 1

Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Competence
Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Precompetence	Cultural Proficiency

Figure 1. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum.

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Best Practices in Preparation of School Leaders: Recommendations Based on an Analysis of the Levine Report

Jess House and William Bozeman

INTRODUCTION

In an ideal educational leadership world, sharing of best practices would be conducted in a festive atmosphere where achievement is recognized and celebrated. Exemplary practices in each of the program aspects identified by Chenoweth, Carr, and Ruhl (2002) would be on display for study, inspiration, and emulation: program philosophy and design; recruitment and selection; curriculum; instruction/delivery systems; internship/practicum; program evaluation; and professional development (p. 34). In the real world, however, determination of best practices in preparing school leaders has become complicated by a recent flurry of polemical publications.

These critics have undermined the assumption that best practices for preparation of educational leaders are found within university programs. Hess and Kelly (2005), for example, observed that university programs of educational leadership that have been described as exceptional were lacking in innovation. The two school leadership preparation programs that they identified as promising sources of innovation, New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) and the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Leadership Academy, operate entirely outside any university. Likewise, Levine (2005) did not consider any of the 505 university educational leadership programs in the USA as exemplary, although he acknowledged that a minority of them were strong, citing programs at Wisconsin and Vanderbilt as examples. Indeed, the “most promising model” that Levine (2005, p. 54) could locate was both outside the universities and outside of the USA, the United Kingdom’s National College for School Leadership, an institution described by Prime Minister Tony Blair as intended to “bypass [his] nation’s universities” (Tucker & Coddington, 2002, p. 24). In this chapter, we examine several of the claims made in *Educating School Leaders* (Levine, 2005), the latest of this genre.

THE LEVINE REPORT

Like other publications that have been critical of educational leadership programs, the Levine Report argues that current practices and structures of preparation of school leaders are problematic rather than exemplary and should be replaced rather than redesigned (Hess, 2004; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2003; Tucker & Coddington, 2002). Similar to other critical publications, conservative foundations provided financial support for *Educating School Leaders*. However, unlike other recent publications critical of educational leadership, the Levine Report is authored by a self-described education insider, Dr. Arthur Levine, the president of Teachers College, Columbia University. Also, unlike the other critical reports, the conclusions in the Levine Report are supported by extensive survey research data.

Levine characterized most educational leadership programs as ranging “from inadequate to appalling” (p.

23) and both programs and professors as largely disconnected from practice. These charges add to those that condemn educational leadership programs as having “little bearing on the problems that real school leaders face” (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2003, p. 26), that many are “weakly structured, inadequately designed, and poorly implemented” (Kelley & Peterson, 2002, p. 272), and that “unlike business schools or graduate programs in public administration, even elite programs in education generally impose little quality control” (Hess, 2004, p. 147). The Levine Report described educational leadership programs and professors in largely negative terms, finding the

overall quality of educational administration programs to be poor. The majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country’s leading universities. Collectively, school leadership programs are not successful on any of the nine criteria presented (Levine, p. 23).

The Levine Report has, in turn, been criticized for “significant weaknesses” and “conflation of preparation with degree programs” (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005, pp. 2–3), for offering “little in the way of direction and recommendations” (Imig, 2005, p. 2), and for painting “all preparation programs with the same brush” (Ferrandino, Houston, & Tirozzi, 2005, p. 1).

Flawed Inferences

The data gathered by Levine were impressive in magnitude, but the inferences he drew from these data were often suspect. The data included surveys of heads of all US education schools and departments (Deans Survey), 5,469 members of faculties of education (Faculty Survey), 15,468 alumni of education schools (Alumni Survey), 1,800 principals (Principals Survey), and case studies of 28 schools and departments of education. In addition to the surveys, doctoral dissertation abstracts were sampled and other data were gathered from various sources.

Levine described how few faculty in *colleges of education* were experienced as school principals (6%) and how few deans had been superintendents (8%). These low percentages were used to support his findings that “faculties in leadership programs [were found] to be distressingly weak” (Levine, p. 35), and too many have “minimal, if any, recent experience in the practice of school administration” (p. 35). Levine failed to recognize the difference between faculties of education and faculties of educational leadership, a mistake that could be charitably overlooked if it had not been made by an *education insider*. In any case, it is not legitimate to base sweeping generalizations on data from a sample that does not match the target of the inference.

In another instance of mismatch between sample and target, Levine attempted to show that the GRE scores of persons who had identified educational leadership as a field of study were lower than the scores of persons who had identified other fields of study. From these data Levine inferred that educational leadership programs had *low standards for admission and low standards for graduation*. However, the GRE scores were of applicants rather than those *admitted or graduated* from the programs.

Committing another type of error, Levine stated that “the typical course of study for the principalship has little to do with the job . . . appear[ing] to be a nearly random collection of courses” (p. 27). He supported this claim by presenting the percentages of principals who reported that they had taken certain courses (e.g., instructional leadership, school law, etc.). He concluded that the courses “seemed little more than a grab bag of survey courses,” (p. 27). However, the respondents were forced to choose from a list of generic course titles provided by Levine on his questionnaire. Any possible set of choices made by respondents would resemble a *grab bag* because the list from which they chose was arguably a *grab bag*. The course titles on Levine’s list did not include the titles of the courses that the respondents had actually taken. Further, Levine’s conclusion was reached without examination of program aims, objectives, conceptual frameworks, learning modes, assessment procedures, or other contextual features.

Poor Response Rate

The low response rates to the Alumni Survey (34%), Faculty Survey (40%), and Principal Survey (41%) are a serious weakness. By themselves, low response rates may not be biasing, but they are a problem when they oc-

cur because of difficulty in estimating the extent of nonresponse bias (Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003). Decisions to respond may have been affected by, for example, personality characteristics (Marcus & Schutz, 2005) or topic interest (Groves, Presser, & Dipko, 2004). Low response rates open the door to the possibility that respondents may have differed significantly from nonrespondents. In this case, inferences may be misleading, should be made cautiously, and should be accompanied by a description of potential nonresponse bias. Levine did not feel it necessary to follow these guidelines.

Audience for Levine Report?

Levine described himself as an *education insider* with the ability “to speak candidly to the education school community” (p. 6), but fellow educators might wonder if they were indeed his intended audience. If they were, Levine would have presented his report at the annual meetings of the American Association of Colleges of Teachers of Education (AACTE), the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), or the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), all obvious venues for speaking directly to deans of education and professors of educational leadership. He might also have sought to publish his report in a publication that would be likely to reach them. Instead, he chose to release his unrefereed report through press conferences and by publication on the World Wide Web.

Negative Framing of Data

Levine vowed in the preface to “let the data speak for themselves” (p. 7), but he did not make available the raw data upon which he based conclusions. Rather, he erred in interpreting unremarkable statistics, and, in some instances, offered no more than an anecdote about one institution or a quotation from one informant to support broad generalizations. Young et al. (2005) noted that it was “unclear why Levine felt compelled to frame his findings only in negative terms, misrepresenting in many cases both his own data and the results of other research projects” (p. 3). The credibility of Levine’s findings would have benefited if he had clarified the bias(es) that he brought to the study (Creswell, 1999, p. 196). Despite these flaws, the Levine Report has been successful in calling attention to problems in the preparation of educational leaders, and the weaknesses of the report should not discourage the professoriate from giving these problems due consideration.

Points of Agreement

1. We agree that educational leadership programs, unlike many programs in professional schools (e.g., business, law, medicine), are held accountable for our nation’s educational ills. Perhaps the medical schools should also be blamed for the estimated 98,000 deaths that occur annually in the nation’s hospitals from medical errors (Leape & Wehrwein, 2005), and schools of accounting should be blamed for Enron, HealthSouth, and WorldCom.
2. High-performing school leaders are central to effective schools. Decades of research offer abundant and clear data on this point (e.g., Miller, 2003; Reeves, 2004). Perhaps Marzano said it best: “leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform” (p. 172, 2003).
3. High standards and evaluations of the extent to which those standards are being met will almost certainly enhance the quality of any preparation program (Reeves, 2002).
4. Internships and field experiences are essential to the preparation of school leaders. Many students rank the internship as the most important component of their preparation experience.
5. Educational leadership programs are often viewed as *cash cows* by college deans and other university administrators. High volumes of advanced graduate students are encouraged, but provision of resources is held to the minimum.
6. Adequate resources for competent faculty in sufficient numbers are needed, but typically not provided to educational leadership programs. Salaries for entry-level professors are hardly competitive with salaries for the assistant principalship, much less more senior positions.
7. Admissions for educational leadership programs should be closely reviewed. Some university administra-

tors have created the cartoon-like climate of *admissions contests*, replete with distribution of weekly admissions reports that read like a sales manager's analysis.

8. College and district personnel must work together to address the critical shortages of administrators over the next 4-5 years, shortages that exceed 50% in high-growth districts.
9. Abuse of adjunct faculty employment can seriously endanger academic quality. Adjuncts can be a great asset or a serious program liability.
10. Educational leadership, as a field, has an inadequate research base (Achilles, 1990), and not enough research of the needed quality has been conducted "to guide the education of teachers and school leaders in this country" (Yinger, 2005, p. 2).

Points of Disagreement

11. The diversity among the nation's 1200+ schools and colleges of education and the 500+ school administration programs is immense. Levine acknowledged this and warned against critics painting the education schools with a broad brush (p. 6). Regrettably, he did not heed his own warning.
12. Contrary to the theme of the report, there have been, and continue to be, substantive efforts at reforming and improving educational leadership programs, including the work of the Interstate School Leader's Licensure Consortium, implementation of the NCATE/ELCC standards, and major revisions in standards for state licensure. Levine implied that the changes that these efforts have produced have been procedural or minimally substantive (p. 85).
13. The generalization that programs do not use experienced school administrators as faculty is weak and unsupported. Most program faculties are staffed with professors who have first-hand experience in school leadership. These provide the basis for credibility and meaningful professional linkages with the field and are critical to program quality.
14. Due to the enormous shortages of administrators expected over the next 4-5 years, districts and universities are involved in collaboration to a greater degree than ever. This collaboration should be used as a springboard to clearer articulation with colleagues in the field.
15. Simply put, Levine does not appear to understand the difference between certification and academic degrees. A principal or superintendent does not have to hold a doctoral degree. The doctoral degree, however, has become an attractive asset (some have referred to it as a *ticket* or *union card*) in the competition for major principalships and superintendencies.
16. Great strides have been made to enhance the internship in many educational leadership programs. Most professors, practitioners, and students agree that this is a critical aspect of leadership preparation. Levine did not provide credible support for his "bottom line" claim that "school leadership programs offer little in the way of meaningful clinical or field-based education" (p. 41), and this is emphatically not the case in many programs.
17. Even though many educational leadership faculty members have not been practitioners for some period of time, they often maintain their connections to the field through service as program evaluators, members of accreditation teams, consultants to schools and districts, and similar activities.
18. Levine seems not to understand that districts' salary schedules and compensation systems are policies developed by school boards, not universities. School districts have their own rationales for their personnel policies and are likely to see these as compelling.

VITAL QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The flaws of the Levine Report should not lead to dismissal of the vital questions purpose, quality, and resources. These concerns have surfaced in the past, and we have been puzzled that they did not stimulate vigorous discussion among the professoriate at national conferences, regional meetings, and, perhaps most importantly, in program and department offices and conference rooms.

Purpose

Do educational leadership programs aim to prepare school leaders who are well equipped for filling entry level professional roles, or is the aim to produce scholars of educational leadership, particularly in doctoral programs? Large numbers of educational leadership doctoral graduates are produced every year; for example, in 2002–2003, 2,169 doctoral degrees in educational leadership and general administration were conferred (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005)¹. Note: While educational leadership and general administration was the largest program of study, the number of these degrees pales when compared to the number of First-Professional degrees: 39,067 LLB and JD degrees, 36,163 health degrees (e.g., medical, pharmaceutical, dentistry, etc.), and 5,164 Divinity/Ministry degrees (NCES, 2005). Yet, universities struggle to fill the positions vacated by retiring professors. While data regarding numbers of failed faculty searches are not available, informal communications suggest that the number is high and growing. If our advanced degree programs in educational leadership are of acceptable quality, why is it so difficult to recruit new faculty members? If the doctoral focus is toward practice and not research, do the statistics and research course requirements and the dissertation requirement make sense?

Quality

What conditions are needed to encourage innovation and best practices in educational leadership programs? How can quality be maintained by programs in the face of widespread pressure by university officials to increase the number of admitted students? What can be done to improve or eliminate inadequate programs? How should adequacy be determined? Shall we attempt to police our own ranks or rely on outside institutions? How shall this be done?

Resources

How will adequate resources for educational leadership programs be ensured? Levine took universities to task for their systematic milking of the schools of education, we agree that the cash cow concept is long overdue for retirement and must be put to pasture. How can deans, provosts, and presidents be convinced to allocate adequate resources to educational leadership programs, especially when these programs will never be perceived as *sexy* as nanotechnology or molecular biology? The provosts and presidents are accountable for the conditions that educational leadership programs and professors enjoy, or endure. If colleges of education and educational leadership programs are to have options for solving problems of purpose and quality, then the universities must end the practice of redistributive budgeting.

VOICE AND SILENCE

The few replies made by educational leadership professors to these charges have “echoed in the wells of silence” (Simon, 1964). The somnolence of the professoriate in the face of the Levine Report’s decidedly negative depiction of them and their programs is disappointing. Vigorous debates, even intemperate and forceful arguments, are often necessary precursors to effective action taken by groups. In this section, we explore possible explanations for the phenomenon of the silent professoriate, considering theories at three levels of analysis: the individual, the organization, and the society.

The Individual: Professors and Career Trajectories

Many professors of educational leadership have experience as school administrators at some level. This experience is invaluable but may have the perverse effect of contributing to the phenomenon of the silent professoriate. School administrators tend to learn to be circumspect in their words and actions and to discern the rewards and sanctions that might result from their behavior. Expectations for practitioners who become professors include development of an “active research agenda, [publication of] scholarly articles, [making] presentations that enhance the professional discipline, [involvement] in community and university-related service,

[and exhibiting] effective teaching skills” (Harris, 2000, p. 19). The pressure of meeting these new expectations, the ambiguity of the level of performance required to meet them, and the lengthy period of uncertainty about the tenure and promotion decision are major factors in the socialization of professors. Vocal disagreements with senior faculty or administrators may lead to serious consequences. This may well persuade professors to play it safe, keep their own counsel, and to avoid speaking on matters that have little or no prospect of personal benefit.

The Organization: Defensive Routines

Organizational defensive routines (Argyris, 1985) may contribute to the silent professoriate. Argyris found that nearly all participants in his studies of organizations held values that were consistent with winning and avoiding embarrassment. These values led to defensive routines in individuals, groups, and organizations that prevented the expression of thoughts, feelings, and actions that caused people to feel vulnerable to the reaction of others. This self-protective mechanism only allowed for correction of immediate problems without the examination or alteration of underlying values or policies. These routines are at work within educational leadership departments, inhibiting discussion of problems, preventing organizational learning, and silencing the professoriate on urgent issues.

The University: Guild Traditions

Keeping silent may be a means of maintaining privilege. Bullough (2005) observed two troubling trends in the university: “toward silencing dissent and an accelerating professorial drift toward individualism and privatism” (§ 1). He indicted universities for their selfishness and explained that silence is ensured when “preserving privilege is the dominant institutional aim and when conforming to guild traditions of silence and sameness is the prerequisite for membership” (§ 5). Individualism in the academy weakens the cohesion of the academic department and breeds detachment. In these conditions, “discussion yields to guarded chatter, surface becomes substance, and nothing is risked because nothing matters but getting ahead within one’s guild and confirming guild standards” (§ 8). The motto for guild members is *don’t ask, don’t tell*.

The Society: Spiral of Silence

Noelle-Neumann (1984) coined the phrase *spiral of silence* to describe a self-reinforcing loop that allowed one view to dominate public opinion. When proponents of one side of an issue are more enthusiastic, energetic, and willing to openly express their beliefs, those on the other side of the issue feel left out, often withdraw, and fall silent (pp. 4–5). Their initial restraint causes the proponents to appear stronger and, consequently, their side to appear weaker. This process accelerates in cyclical fashion until one side dominates and the weaker side is completely mute. She found empirical support for her theory and descriptions of the spiral of silence or related phenomena in the writings of Rousseau, Hume, Locke, Martin Luther, Machiavelli, and others. The spiral of silence suggests that the professoriate feels that negative opinions of educational leadership programs are in the ascendancy, that they feel isolated, and have withdrawn into silence.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We had hoped that the Levine Report would stimulate dialogue, debate, and discussion among the professoriate, but this appears doubtful. The Levine Report and similar publications will be influential in determining the future of educational leadership preparation if the professoriate remains silent. We are concerned that the many oversimplifications and questionable conclusions in the Levine Report will lead to bad policy decisions. A feeble response from the professoriate is likely to further embolden critics, encouraging them to indulge in even harsher pronouncements in the next round of attacks. Much can and should be said and done to defend and increase the effectiveness of educational leadership programs.

If space allowed, most of the points of agreement and disagreement presented earlier could be converted to specific recommendations to conclude this paper. Two recommendations will be made, both of which would go

a long way toward changing the process of socialization experienced by new professors, disrupting the guild traditions of silence, weakening the organizational defensive routines, and minimizing the intimidating effects of negative opinion. These should encourage innovation in university-based educational leadership programs, deal with many of the serious problems, and alter the dynamics of the silent professoriate.

Establish a National Blue Ribbon Educational Leadership Panel

A national blue-ribbon panel comprised of professors and practitioners of educational leadership should be convened to review the 500+ programs of educational leadership for the purpose of identifying their strengths and weaknesses and recommending inadequate programs for closure. Levine failed to offer convincing support for his conclusion that “most of the programs [he] examined in the course of [his] study were in fact inadequate” (p. 65), but we agree that “weak programs should be strengthened or closed” (p. 65). Review of the programs and the criteria for evaluation should come from educational leadership. The quality of university educational leadership programs should be of paramount concern, but the present system of state, regional, and national accreditation has failed to ensure their vitality or adequacy. The blue-ribbon panel would improve program quality by recognizing best practices and programs that are effectively preparing school leaders and by identifying programs that are ineffective. Parent institutions would be notified of the findings, and, in the case of ineffective programs, be given a reasonable period of time to bring the programs up to standard.

Reorient Educational Leadership Programs to the Field—the Professional School Model

Educational leadership programs and professors must reorient themselves toward their own field of practice. Universities must encourage educational leadership programs to develop their unique relationships with the field and must recognize that the professional school model offers an organizational structure that is better suited to achieve this.

The turn toward the field must be accompanied by steps to ensure robust research into educational leadership and management, the core processes of schooling, and preparation modes. Experience as K–12 school educator and administrator is valuable but often delays entry of professors into higher education until mid-career, and this may have contributed to the poor quality of research in the field. Support for these professors should be provided in the form of faculty research teams headed by at least one experienced researcher (Achilles, 1990), statistical and research design consultation, provision of research assistants, and mentoring.

The professional school model altered the role of professors of educational leadership. Changes in performance expectations, as reflected by annual performance reviews and the tenure and promotion procedure, would assure professors that their careers would not be harmed if they invested heavily in working closely with practitioners. Professors would be able to advocate for improved preparation without fear that they might incur the displeasure of senior academic or administrative figures.

Many professors of educational leadership have developed satisfying professional relationships with the field, but these have largely been individual in nature, and this recommendation is for a change in the structural organization of educational leadership programs. A stronger connection with and reorientation toward the field would free educational leadership programs from the arts and sciences model of tenure and promotion. This freedom would enable educational leadership programs to conceptualize anew the areas of teaching, research, and service, and how these should be performed.

These recommendations are offered in the hopes of stimulating dialogue, discussion, and debate—necessary precursors to the formulation of the sound concepts that will allow the educational leadership professoriate to create its own future. Adoption of these recommendations would encourage the innovation that is needed for universal recognition of best practices in university-based educational leadership programs.

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Transforming the Future of Principal Development and Support: An Integrated Certification and Induction Approach

Erika Hunt and Norman Durflinger

Quality leadership is an essential component of any school reform efforts directed at improving student achievement (Peterson & Finn, 1985; NCSL Task Force on School Leadership, 2002). The results of a meta-analysis of quantitative and qualitative studies on the contribution of leadership to student achievement conducted by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, K. (2004) found that the principal's leadership accounts for about 20% of the school's impact on student achievement, second only to the impact of teachers. Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger (2003), through a quantitative meta-analysis of the research on the direct affect of leadership on student achievement, found that school leadership has a small, yet significant effect on student achievement.

Other studies have identified the effects of specific leadership skills on improved student achievement. Waters, Marzano, & McNulty (2003) through an examination of the effects of school leadership practices on student achievement identified 21 research-based school leadership responsibilities and practices significantly associated with student achievement. According to their results, a principal who improved his or her ability in each of these 21 responsibilities by one standard deviation could improve student test scores by 10%. The growing body of research supporting the impact of school leadership on student shows that principals matter.

With this recognition, is the increased discussion on the complex nature of a principal's work. To successfully lead in today's schools, principals must play an expanded role that includes instructional, distributed, and transformational leadership skills (The Broad Foundation, 2003; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Grogan & Andrews; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Leithwood et. al., 2004). A report by the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) noted that no longer can school principals function in their role by being efficient building managers. Instead, a principal must fulfill a position that requires a variety of roles and responsibilities designed to address the workplace needs of successful teachers and to foster improved student achievement.

While the roles and responsibilities of principals have expanded, an increasing number of studies and reports bring attention to the slow pace in which preparation programs are adapting (Grogan & Andrew, 2002; Hess & Kelly, 2005). In a survey of 1,006 public school superintendents and 925 public school principals, 72% of superintendents and 67% of principals agreed that administrative preparation programs are "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's school district" (Farkas, S., Johnson, J. and Duffett, A., 2003, p. 39). Ninety-five percent of the principals surveyed reported that colleagues and previous on-the-job experiences were more helpful for preparing them for their jobs than graduate school (Farkas, S., Johnson, J. and Duffett, A., 2003). Yet, these criticisms of preparation programs are not something new.

Principal preparation programs have received public scrutiny for decades, beginning in 1960 when the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) called the preparation of school leaders a "dismal montage" (Creighton, 2002). A 1987 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEE) recommended closing 40% of the nation's 505 administrative preparation programs, claiming they lacked the resources and commitment to offer a quality program. In 2003, the Broad and the Sloan Founda-

tions brought a group of policy makers and practitioners together to develop a “manifesto” for preparing high quality leaders for schools. One recommendation advocated that school districts involve themselves with the training of principals and seek out many providers, not just universities, to train principals (The Broad Foundation, 2003). The release of Levine’s (2005) report on the dismal quality of higher education preparation programs has brought the criticism on administrative preparation programs back into the spotlight.

Much of this blame is placed upon a disconnect between universities and school districts on the training of principals. Yet, while many agree that reform within administrative preparation programs is needed, practitioners and policymakers alike realize that to strengthen the profession, more needs to occur than simply the reform of principal preparation. Twenty years ago, the recommendation was made that states should revise their licensure and certification requirements to focus more explicitly on evidence of knowledge and skill rather than classroom experience and credentials for licensure (Peterson and Finn, 1985). Today, a handful of states have implemented advanced certification systems that align certification with the continuous development of principals’ skills and competencies.

Much of the advocacy and research on advanced certification systems for administrators has been done in the policy arena, an arena more traditionally centered on driving policy discussions rather than testing the impact of policy practices. Therefore, there remains a lack of research that tests the impact of advanced certification systems on student achievement. While the lack of this research may prevent one from drawing the conclusion that advanced certification systems are a best practice, it can certainly be said that they are a new practice that many states are considering.

One state in particular—Illinois—has engaged its public and private universities, the Illinois and Chicago Principal’s Associations, local school districts, and statewide education organizations in an integrated process for preparing, certifying, and supporting novice principals. This paper will capture the work that is being done around certification reform by first providing a conceptual vision for a meaningful, promising model to grow and sustain high quality principals. Following this, the paper will highlight advanced certification systems in other states, including the new certification system for Illinois.

A NATIONAL CALL TO ADVANCE THE ADMINISTRATION PROFESSION

Serious calls for reforming the administrative profession began in the late 1980s when the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) appointed a 27-member commission to examine the quality of leadership preparation. The result was a list of recommendations, one of which was to develop a two-tiered licensure system for administrators. According to the report, the first tier (the entry-level licensure) should be granted after completion of a state-approved program and the second tier (full licensure status) should be given dependent upon evidence of successful performance in the field and continuing professional development (National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration [NCEE], 1987). The Commission also recommended the establishment of a National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA), which was established in January 1988 following the recommendation of the report.

After its development, NPBEA issued a report that provided nine recommendations for improving preparation programs (Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001). One of these recommendations was the creation of a national certification examination that administrative candidates must pass to be licensed (NPBEA, 1989). While a national exam never materialized, almost a decade later, professional standards, known as Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, were developed that defined what school leaders should know and be able to do. In 2000, NPBEA assembled a group that developed performance-based standards for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education’s (NCATE) review of educational administration programs (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). The NCATE standards, otherwise referred to as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards, are aligned with the ISLLC standards. NCATE accredited programs must demonstrate how they met the ELCC standards to retain their accreditation.

In 2001, NPBEA issued a paper centered on its recommendation to develop an “independent, free standing, voluntary system of advanced certification for principals and superintendents” (p. 4). Building off its previous recommendations, the report also called for the establishment of an American Board for Leadership in Education (ABLE), whose responsibility was to set standards for advanced practice for administrators. According to the NPBEA (2001) report, a tiered certification system would establish professional norms or standards for the

profession that follow administrators throughout their career pathway—from aspiring to initial practice to advanced practice. In addition, such a system could be used for quality assurance that places and maintains effective leaders in our schools.

While these three reports (NCEEA, 1987; NPBEA, 1989; NPBEA, 2001) have served as seminal pieces for advocating and shaping reform within the certification of administrators, it is important to note some similarities between the teacher certification and administrator certification reform movements. At the same time that UCEA put together its 27-member commission, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) began working to develop rigorous standards for what teachers should know and be able to do and to certify teachers that meet those standards (NBPTS, 1991). As a result, in several states, including Illinois, NBPTS earns a teacher a “master” certification. These national board standards were developed to complement, but not replace, state systems for licensing beginning teachers. It is this type of voluntary advanced certification in which the advanced certification for principals and superintendents recommended by NPBEA was based.

Accordingly, much can be learned from the NBPTS certification movement. Studies have shown not only the positive impact of NBPTS on student achievement (Cavalluzzo, 2004; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004; Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley, & Berliner, 2004), but also positive perceptions from teachers who have gone through the NBPTS process (NBPTS, 2001). The results of a study conducted by NBPTS found that 80 % of the nationally certified teachers surveyed found National Board certification to be stronger than any other professional development they had experienced while teaching. While the National Board Certification movement was initiated as a way to offer incentives for professional development and growth for teachers, the certification process has become a “forceful professional development experience” for those that go through the certification process (NBPTS, fall 2001, p. 3). The purposeful design process for certifying master teachers and requiring recertification every 10 years to retain certification supported the national discussion for the need for a similarly designed advanced certification of administrators.

According to NPBEA (2001), an advanced certification system for administrators is necessary in order to set higher standards in the field. Administrators can set goals to aspire to over time as they work to build their competencies. Some states (e.g., Arkansas and Louisiana) have adopted voluntary certification models like the one recommended by NPBEA. However, other states (Kentucky, Maryland, and Oregon) have implemented mandatory advanced certification systems.

The ideal conceptualization of an advanced certification systems is a mandatory licensure route that require administrators to show evidence of their skills and on-the-job performance in order to renew or advance their license (Mazzeo, 2003). However, without a national model in place, many states have implemented advanced certification systems altered to meet specific needs of the state. The next section provides an overview of the different advanced certification models implemented by states with these structures in place.

STATE ADVANCED AND TIERED CERTIFICATION MODELS

Traditional state certification programs typically require that an individual complete a master’s degree in administration at an accredited university and pass a state certification exam. Once completed, the person is certified for a principal position. Many states are now offering or mandating a multi-level process that provides for advanced certification. Advanced certification requires principals to not only receive their provisional or initial certification (based on completion of a university program and passage of a certification exam), but that also requires or allows principals to progress through another level or two in order to receive advanced certification and continuous development. Traditional state certification systems are “keyed to input measures of competence (e.g., courses taken, prior teaching experience, and licensure assessment scores) rather than outcome measures (e.g., on-the-job performance or impact on student learning)” (Mazzeo, 2003). The concept of an advanced certification system, on the other hand, alters state licensure systems to assure not only that principals meet basic professional requirements but also that they follow an upward trajectory that requires evidence of professional outcomes and competencies.

Grogan and Andrews (2003) note the growing trend among states that require principals to provide evidence of an “acquisition of competencies” for licensure (p. 251) rather than based only on the successful completion of a series of university courses. Likewise, Hess (2003), in a publication from the Progressive Policy Institute, advocated for the inception of new state administrative licensure system that is performance-based, incorpo-

rates on-going professional support systems, and holds leaders accountable. Going even further, Waters and Grubb (2004) advocate for states to implement licensure systems that help administrators to develop the leadership practices proven by research to be effective.

Components of a Tiered or Advanced Certification System

Currently, 15 states have advanced certification systems for principals, while two other states (Alabama and Virginia) are proposing the implementation of an advanced certification system. In 1983, California was the first state to implement such a system. California's advanced certification system consists of a preliminary and a professional certificate. A five-year preliminary credential is the first credential issued after an individual meets basic credential requirements through coursework. Advancement to the second level—the professional tier—takes place after an administrator has two years of experience in a full-time administrative position while holding the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential and has completed one of the following: (1) an individualized program of advanced preparation designed in cooperation with an employer and program sponsor; (2) a State Board of Education-approved Principal Training Program; (3) a streamlined assessment option offered by a California college or university with an accredited program that allows candidates to demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities; (4) a Commission-approved alternative program; or, (5) a Commission-approved performance assessment.

Another state, Kentucky, has issued principal's licenses following a two-tiered model (initial and professional) since 1990 (Fiore, 2002). In Kentucky, a principal candidate who has completed an approved preparation program, has completed the appropriate assessment requirements, has a master's degree in education, and three years of teaching experience receives Level I certification. After five years, a Level I certified principal may apply for a Level II certificate. To obtain the Level II certificate a principal must successfully complete two years of experience as a principal within five years and be recommended by an authority approved by the state who certifies the person has successfully completed the approved Level II program. Arkansas and Wisconsin have both implemented master principal programs, similar in concept to National Board Certification, but through a state-based certification process.

A study by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2003) found that of the SREB states that have implemented tiered models, none require evidence of on-the job performance as a criterion for professional licensure. Instead, these state systems utilize the standard "input" criteria (e.g., participation in induction program, years practicing, number of professional development courses) as the means by which to grant a standard certificate. "If states want a large pool of highly effective school principals, policymakers need to change the licensure processes and adopt performance indicators that clearly document a school leader's ability to improve student achievement over time" (SREB, 2003). This requires the implementation of performance indicators that measure principals' progress as they advance through their continuous development.

A recent study of state certification systems also concluded this same sentiment noting that that no state has developed a statewide certification system that is based on a "coherent learning-focused school leadership agenda" (Adams & Copland, 2003, p. 1). Instead, state certification systems license principals based on indicators, such as academic degrees and teaching experience, and knowledge and behaviors that the principal brings to the job. Rather, the authors recommend that state certification systems must license administrators in the larger context of leadership development, following the pathway of the administrator from pre-service to advanced service in the field.

Teacher Leadership Endorsement

In recognition of the need to align certification with the pathway of the principal, many states have incorporated teacher leadership components within their advanced certification systems (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Ryan, 1999; The Education Alliance, 2002). As a result, several state certification systems also provide state certification or endorsements for teacher leaders. Accordingly, the teacher leadership endorsement is a designation granted to a teacher who completes a master's program in teacher leadership, has evidenced-based performance as a teacher leader in addition to completion of university coursework in leadership, or is a National Board certified teacher with leadership experiences and additional leadership coursework.

For example, Louisiana's two-level certification structure also includes a teacher leader endorsement that provides a formal credential for teachers aspiring for leadership positions in schools. Following this trend, Illinois' advanced certification legislation (Senate Bill 860) also creates a teacher leader endorsement as well as an alternative route to Type 75 certification for NBCTs who wish to become instructional leaders.

State Certification Systems

Table 1 summarizes the certification processes within states that have an identified advanced certification system. The states listed in Table 1 are those that have been identified in the literature (National Center for Education Information, 2003; SREB, 2002). To validate that these states had tiered certification systems, as well as to collect accurate information on these systems, a phone call was made to Department of Education staff within each of these states. Documents regarding each state's certification system, and in some cases legislation, was reviewed.

The researchers also examined each state certification system according to a number of questions:

1. Is the state certification system a standards-based program using either ISLLC standards or other standards developed by the state?
2. Does the state certification system include a standards-based evaluation that does not grant the next level of certification until the principal provides evidence that he or she meets certain competencies or on-the-job performances?
3. Does the state certification system include a mentoring component that the principal must complete in order to receive the next level of certification?
4. Does the state certification system require the principal to complete a performance-based portfolio in order to receive the next level of certification?
5. Does the state certification system also include a pathway or endorsement for teacher leaders?

Table 1 summarizes how each multi-level certification state measured on each of these six questions.

State Models

In the absence of a national advanced certification system, there are similarities as well as variance among the different models that states have implemented. For example, Louisiana's mandatory two-tiered certification system initially grants principals a Level I certificate. To achieve the Level II certificate, principals must complete a two-year induction program offered by a university facilitator and principal mentor and develop a portfolio that documents their competency to meet specific state standards. Ohio also has a two-tiered certification system with the second tier requiring professional development provided by the administrator associations. The program has a mentoring component and requires principals to maintain a portfolio throughout the two-year mentoring program.

Arkansas's three-tiered standards-based system also has a mentoring component and a portfolio requirement. Unlike the tiered certification systems in Ohio and Louisiana, which are mandatory for principals, Arkansas' Master Principal Program is a voluntary, three-phase (approximately three year) program that provides significant bonuses to practicing principals achieving Master Principal designation. The program is administered by the Arkansas Leadership Academy, though the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Arkansas Leadership Academy jointly determined the criteria for selection of candidates and developed rigorous assessments.

Oregon's mandatory advanced certification system takes an even different approach than the systems in place in Louisiana, Ohio, and Arkansas. Its advanced certification requirements are directly tied to the ISLLC standards as well as the state's cultural competency standards. Accordingly, Oregon's advanced certification system is designed to prepare its principals with the competencies needed to be a strong instructional leader, including the competencies needed to work with diverse student populations. In doing so, the state developed objectives for the initial and continuing administrators' licensure, as well as outlined knowledge and skills required of principals at each level of licensure.

Table 1. State Advanced Certification Systems.

State	Standards-Based Program ¹	Provides Evidence of Competency ²	Required Mentoring Component	Performance Based Portfolio	Teacher Leadership Endorsement	Web Site
AL ³	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	http://www.ti.state.al.us/gc/Task%20Force%203%20%20Documents/FISRT%20DRAFT%20OFF%20PROPOSED%20CERTIFICATION%20STANDARDS-II.doc
AR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴	No	http://arkedu.state.ar.us/admin/administrators_licensure.html
CA	Yes	No	Yes ⁵	Yes ⁵	No	http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl574c.html
DE	Yes	No	No	No	No	https://deeds.doe.state.de.us/certificate/deeds_decree.aspx#decretdsys
IL	Yes	No ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes	http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/eafdept/centerforedpcol/cy/down-loads/tiered%20certification%20proposal.pdf
KY	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	http://www.kyepsb.net/certification/principalcert.asp
LA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	http://www.doe.state.la.us/de/uploads/7365.doc
MO	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	http://www.dese.mo.gov/schoollaw/rulesregs/EducCertManual/17%20Elementary%20Principal%2004.pdf

¹Standards-Based Programs either used ISLLC Standards or state standards that closely resembled ISLLC standards.

²States with performance-based evaluation tied to principal competencies and evidenced performance. Although many of the states had a local evaluation component, most certification requirements were not tied to principal competencies or evidence of principals' performance.

³Shaded columns include states that have a conceptualized advanced certification system but have not yet implemented it through legislative, rules, or regulation changes.

⁴Arkansas and Illinois have a performance-based evaluation component in its master principal program, but it is not a requirement for standard certification.

⁵Mentoring and assessment are two optional requirements to advance to the next level through California's certification system.

⁶Illinois' original state proposal included an evidence-base competency requirement to advance to the next level of certification; however, in the policy negotiation for the legislation, this component was removed.

⁷Principals in Wisconsin are required to complete a Professional Development Plan (PDP) that is assisted and reviewed by a PDP Team that includes both a K-12 and higher education representative.

⁸Principals going through Wisconsin's master principal program are required to complete a performance-based portfolio to receive the certification.

Table 1 (continued). State Advanced Certification Systems.

State	Standards-Based Program ¹	Provides Evidence of Competency ²	Required Mentoring Component	Performance Based Portfolio	Teacher Leadership Endorsement	Web Site
MS	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/lead/olde/Admin_Main.html
NJ	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	http://www.nj.gov/njded/educators/lic-cense/guide.pdf
OH	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	http://www.oassa.org/EYPprogramregistration.html
OR	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	http://www.tspc.state.or.us/comm_agenda.asp?id=19
TN	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	http://www.state.tn.us/education/lic/lic_adm.php
VA	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	http://www.cepionline.org/Publications/SAELP/SAELP%20Report%20Fiore.pdf
WI	Yes	Yes ⁷	No	Yes ⁸	No	http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/watsnew.html
WV	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	http://www.academply.com/cert/certwv.htm

¹Standards-Based Programs either used ISLLC Standards or state standards that closely resembled ISLLC standards.

²States with performance-based evaluation tied to principal competencies and evidenced performance. Although many of the states had a local evaluation component, most certification requirements were not tied to principal competencies or evidence of principals' performance.

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⁸Principals going through Wisconsin's master principal program are required to complete a performance-based portfolio to receive the certification.

Each of these states present unique approaches to certifying and developing principals. Each system also used similar, conventional attributes, such as tying their certification systems to the state standards, and in many states, requiring a mentoring component. Mentoring for new administrators is especially important in advanced certification systems as it provides the one-on-one support and development of a principal. Accordingly, Illinois' advanced certification model incorporates components used in other state certification systems.

AN ADVANCED CERTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR ILLINOIS

Incorporating components used in other state certification systems, Illinois' model for advanced certification is based on two main strategies: (1) teacher leadership; and, (2) mentoring and continuous development/support. The model includes five main components:

- Supporting different pathways to the principalship through an alternative route to administrative certification for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and a newly developed teacher leader endorsement;

- Requiring all new principals to have an experienced principal serve as a mentor during their first year as a principal;

- Revising the continuing professional development for renewal of an administrative certificate to be more closely aligned with the six ISLLC standards;

- Establishing a master principal program; and,

- Requiring mandatory evaluation of principals aligned with state and district standards.

The key elements within each of these five components are detailed below.

SUPPORTING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Teachers form the talent pool from which principals emerge and provide the distributed leadership to support effective teaching and learning. Accordingly, it was decided that any legislation for a strengthened system of support for school leaders must also account for the levels of support to the principal and vice versa.

In 2005, a survey of all NBCTs in the state assessed their interest with serving in leadership positions. According to the survey results, 44% (n=193) of respondents indicated they would pursue an alternative route to the principal certificate if it were developed and 78% (n=342) of the respondents indicated they would pursue a Teacher Leader credential if it were developed. The results of the survey show a definite interest in the state among master teachers in pursuing leadership routes (National Resource Board Center at Illinois State University, 2005).

In addition, there is a need in the state for a different pathway for teachers interested in pursuing teacher leadership opportunities but not interested in an administrative position. In fiscal year 2003, 1,829 Type 75 certificates (the certificate needed for any K–12 administrative position that evaluates teachers) were issued in Illinois, but only 709 people were hired in an administrative position requiring the Type 75 certificate (2004 ISBE Supply and Demand Report). This leaves 1,120 educators who obtained a Type 75 certificate but did not secure an administrative position. While it is hard to account for the various reasons why these Type 75 holders choose not to pursue an administrative job, one reason may be the interest in obtaining leadership skills and experience, though not in an administrative role.

Accordingly, the advanced certification legislation allows two pathways in which eligible teachers can pursue either an alternative route to the principalship or their teacher leader endorsement. The first option is an alternative certificate that allows National Board Certified Teachers to complete a specially designed 15 credit hour principal preparation program and pass the state certification test for the principalship. Although the curriculum requires a shortened number of hours, it is outcomes based. Accordingly, a principal candidate going through this option must provide evidence of meeting each of the required competencies to pass the curriculum.

The second option—the teacher leader endorsement—is not designed to serve a restrictive endorsement, but

rather a career path that recognized teachers who wish to serve in leadership roles. Unlike the curriculum around the alternative route to the principalship, which will include administrative courses specific to the skills that principals need, the teacher leader endorsement program will be specific to instructional courses that prepare teachers on how to lead instructional practices within a building or district.

STATEWIDE MENTORING PROGRAM FOR NEW PRINCIPALS

The use of coaches or mentors for novice principals has become an increasingly used strategy for school districts. Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren (2004), who are associated with the nationally recognized mentoring program at the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, define mentoring as “the practice of providing deliberate support to another individual to help him/her to clarify and/or to achieve goals”. Through the mentoring process, new principals are matched with an experienced principal who provides the on-the-job guidance that helps principals develop competencies in a broad array of leadership skills and practices aimed at improving teaching and learning in their schools (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, & Meyerson, 2004).

According to a 2005 survey of Illinois superintendents, only 59 out of the 401 responding superintendents offer a formal mentoring program for all first-time administrators in their district. A 2005 survey of Illinois principals revealed that only 147 (20%) of the principal respondents, had participated in a formal mentoring program. A higher number, 291 (39%) of the principal respondents, had participated in an informal mentoring experience. Rather than being intentionally paired with an experienced principal through a district-based program, these principals had either sought out an experienced mentor or had an experienced principal take them under his or her wing. When asked whether the State of Illinois should require a mentoring program for first year principals, 62% of principals surveyed (n=760) said that state should offer and pay for a one-year mentoring program for new principals.

In response to this, Illinois’ advanced certification system requires a one-year mandatory mentoring program for all new principals. The mentoring program provides some flexibility for the varying needs of new principals throughout Illinois by allowing different providers (e.g., statewide professional organizations as well as school districts and universities) to administer the mentoring programs. The mentoring program is closely aligned with principals’ professional development experiences to develop principal competencies aligned with the Illinois State School Leader Standards.

RESTRUCTURING THE STATE’S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE

The current professional development structure for principals in Illinois occurs through the Illinois’ Administrators’ Academy (IAA). A principal is required to complete six IAA courses over the five year period after their initial certification. IAA courses are offered by a select number of providers in the state and consist of episodic one-day-a year professional development training to school leaders.

However, we know from the literature that this is not adequate professional development training, which requires more than one day of training. Sparks (2002) advocates that four critical components must be present in any quality professional development for principals: (1) that it is standards-based; (2) that it is intellectually rigorous; (3) that it is job-embedded; and, (4) that it is sustained. Yet, in Illinois, we know that professional development throughout the state is not uniformly job-embedded (designed to address the different stages through which a principal progresses along his or her career pathway) and it is not sustained through multi-day training and follow-up.

To address this problem, Illinois’ new advanced certification system does not make changes within its professional development structure yet. Rather, the advanced certification legislation (SB 860) requires the State Superintendent to put together a task force that will examine the Illinois Administrators’ Academy and determine changes that need to be made to improve professional development for principals and other administrators in the state. It was the hope of the legislation’s architects that recommendations by a statewide task force would suggest and drive the more meaningful and extensive professional development requirements that are needed for the recertification of principals.

DEVELOPING MASTER PRINCIPALS

Following the lead of Arkansas and Wisconsin, Illinois is working on the incorporation of a voluntary master principal designation within its advanced certification system. Under development, the Illinois Master Principal Program will be a rigorous performance-based advanced certification program available on a voluntary basis to all Illinois principals who have completed a one-year mentoring program and the requirements for their five-year renewal period for standard certification. Principals completing this program will receive a designation of Master Principal.

DEVELOPING A SYSTEMIC EVALUATION PROCESS

Current Illinois School Code states that, "School boards shall ensure that their principals are evaluated on their instructional leadership ability and their ability to maintain a positive education and learning climate" (105: 5/10-21.4a). While state law requires the evaluation of principals, it does not specify how often the evaluation should be conducted or require the evaluation to be tied to state leadership standards. Accordingly, a survey of Illinois superintendents (n=401) conducted in spring 2005 found that only 60% of superintendents responding to the survey had a clause for evaluation in their principals' contract (Durflinger and Hunt, 2005).

To address this problem, Illinois' advanced certification system requires every district to evaluate its principals at least once during their contract period. Initially, the intention was to link evaluation to advanced certification; though, politically this was not possible. Instead, the legislation incorporated this mandatory requirement. In addition, a statewide committee is developing a framework for systemic evaluation that is designed to follow a principal through two phases of his/her career: the formal/structured phase and the informal/collaborative phase. This framework is intended to serve as a resource to districts and will include links to existing evaluation pieces used by other districts and state.

CONCLUSION

Multi-level advanced certification systems alter state licensure systems to not only assure not only that principals meet basic professional requirements but also provide an upward trajectory of professional growth and development. While the lack of research on the outcome of advanced certification systems prevents one from making the conclusion that advanced certification systems are a best practice, it can certainly be said that they are a new and promising practice that many states are implementing. Currently, 15 states have multi-level advanced certification or tiered certification models for principals. Illinois is the latest state to implement an advanced certification system for its principals. The impact on this will be monitored in Illinois over the next couple of years to gauge the effectiveness of the new certification system and to prevent it from becoming another passing trend.

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Caveat Lector: A Critical Analysis of the Philosophical and Epistemological Assumptions Underlying ‘Best Practices’

Eileen S. Johnson

As National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) celebrates its 60th Annual Conference, a dedicated effort is underway to begin to explicate the knowledge base of educational administration with a compilation of best practices focusing on the triumvirate role of the professor as a scholar, teacher, and community servant. The primary aim of this article is to not only contribute to the scholarly discourse and debate surrounding the issue of best practices in educational leadership, but to question and perhaps add clarity to the meaning of the expression as it is used within the contextual framework of building the knowledge base. And in the tradition of analytic philosopher George Edward Moore (1959), the author’s intention is to neither disparage the construct of best practice in general, nor question the truth or falsity of specific propositions and assertions made by proponents of best practice, but to challenge readers to think critically about such propositions, analyzing the extent to which they are warranted by logic and evidence under specific circumstances and contexts. Thus the title of the article bears the warning “caveat lector” or let the reader beware.

This article will begin with a rationale for the need to critically examine the construct of “best practice” in order to provide the reader with the historical origins of the term, and its current use in educational literature, policy, and practice. Because it is, at its core, philosophically derived, the construct of “best practice” will be examined through a variety of philosophical orientations, with particular attention given to the epistemological framework embodied by each. Of particular interest are the philosophical orientations of realism, relativism, pragmatism, post-modernism, and reconstructionism since each has had a significant and recurring impact on American Education (Ozmon & Craver, 2003), and each embodies a set of social, political, and educational assumptions through which the implications and ramifications of “best practice” must be interpreted. The article concludes with a set of fundamentals through which best practice may be implemented in the preparation of educational leaders.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM “BEST PRACTICE”

The term, “best practice” began to appear in the business management literature in the 1980s, most notably after the publication of the book, *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The idea behind best practice, in business and in other professions such as software engineering, medicine, and education, is that there is a generally accepted best way of doing something. Thus, authors and professional organizations seek to create specifications for what the best methodology is for any given situation. According to one source (Wikipedia, 2006), there are various interpretations of the meaning and rationale behind best practices. For example, the term is sometimes considered a euphemism that avoids the negative image of copying the business models of a company’s competitors; as particular innovations are adopted as “best practice,” the need to attribute the innovation to one’s competitor is avoided. On the other hand, the use of the term may be considered a manifestation of an intellectual movement in which open-source products and non-proprietary business models are thought to accelerate competition and innovation.

While there seems to be a lack of agreement in the literature as to the definition of best practice, it is generally thought to encompass a set of guidelines or standards for doing something. For example, according to the Center for Virtual Organization and Commerce (2006), a best practice is a method which has been judged superior to other methods. Richard Turner (2002), on the other hand, acknowledges the vagueness of the term and outlines three common meanings: processes necessary for success, broad approaches or philosophies, and practices that have been proven to be beneficial in a specific way. In this article, Turner also points out that there have been cases in which best practices were advocated and that proved clearly false, untenable, or even detrimental on closer examination. Perhaps the most confusing aspect of the term, and one that sparks the most debate and cynicism among practitioners of various professions, is the question of who determines what is a best practice, or how such practices come to be endorsed as "best." This issue is addressed by Luedtke (2004) when he asks the question, "Who declares something as a best practices?" What are the criteria for awarding something the distinction of being a best practice?" (p.1). He goes on to suggest that most "best practices" are, in fact, common practices that are used as standard procedure at best, and at worst, something proven to work once in a specific situation and so, naively, it is believed that it should be in place in all situations. These questions offer a useful starting point for critically examining the term as it is used in educational leadership.

USES OF "BEST PRACTICE" IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

A search of education databases using the Boolean search logic "administration" OR "leadership" AND "Best Practice" yields the following results: 620 books or other materials listed in WorldCat, 610 dissertations and theses from institutions in North America and Europe, 310 articles in leading education publications listed on EducationAbs, 170 journal articles and reports listed on ERIC, and 90 scholarly journal articles listed on ECO. Clearly, much has been written on the topic of best practices for educational administrators and leaders. However, a rudimentary inspection of the titles and abstracts for these articles and reports reveals that what is espoused, recommended or suggested as best practice for educational leaders is often, as pointed out by Luedtke (2004), common practice or broad approaches or philosophies, as pointed out by Turner (2002). For example, Gruner et al. (2003) published a resource for parents, educators, and administrators who work with students with disabilities. The report, sponsored by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, contains a list of fourteen best practices in Reading. Yet, a review of these "best practices" reveals that most, if not all, of these practices are in fact standard teaching practices such as providing explicit instruction, monitoring and assessing student progress, planning instruction, facilitation of conceptual knowledge, daily provision of opportunity for sustained and broad reading and writing experiences at the students' instructional level, development of print-rich environments, and home/school/community collaboration. The fourteen practices described are so general, and so deeply rooted in contemporary teaching standards, it is difficult to identify what is innovative, "best," or meaningfully distinctive from other possible practices. In fact, to deny or neglect any of the stated practices would constitute educational malpractice. And, as Ilsely (2003) notes, if everyone is or should be doing it, it is not best practice but common practice.

On the other hand, "best practices" in educational literature often appear to be broad approaches that derive from specific philosophical orientations rather than practices that have been shown over time and across settings to result in improved student learning. For example, many articles and state reports cite the best practices advocated by Zemleman, Daniels, & Hyde (1998). And yet, these twelve (sometimes thirteen, depending on whether the additional best practice of "expressive" is added) principles of best practice are clearly aligned with constructivist and pragmatic learning theories. As pointed out by Neville Highett (1994), experts do not always agree on what constitutes good teaching. As program director of New South Wales Department of School Education, Highett provides "best practice descriptors" for three dimensions of schooling: teaching and learning, school governance and management, and school leadership and culture. The goal of this endeavor was to "...represent what the profession agrees are parameters for highly effective operation, both at the school and classroom levels" (p. 8). The result was the development of a comprehensive Best Practices Framework in which specific areas and subcomponents of each of the three dimensions were identified and descriptor statements written. However, it is readily apparent that they are not "best practices" at all, but goals toward which educators and leaders should strive. For example, under the area of student learning, one best practice descriptor for student attitude states, "Students are enthusiastic about learning and are actively involved in the learning ex-

perience” (p. 11). While this (and virtually all best practice descriptors contained in the paper) may be worthy goals for educators, they are not in and of themselves “best practice” since they are rarely if ever consistently attainable in the real world.

“BEST PRACTICE” THROUGH THE LENSES OF PHILOSOPHY

When one critically examines much of what is construed as “best practice,” it is not difficult to understand why such assertions and propositions resonate so well with some yet cause others to bristle with irritation. Across professions, best practices are offered with the intention to systematize and standardize processes and techniques in order to maximize efficiency, conserve resources, and improve outcomes (Ilsley, 2003). And yet, as well intended as this may be, others often view such efforts as paternalistic at best when they seem to convey that someone else—often an “ivory-tower” researcher or organizational body—knows what is best for practitioners, thus disregarding the professional integrity and preparation of professionals in the field as well as the unique circumstances and contexts in which practice takes place (Johnson, 2006; Stubbinton, 2004), dishonorable at worst when used as a means to promote special interests and pressure others in the field to conform to a specific policy agenda, and often detrimental to the intellectual and creative progress of a profession (Bach, 2005).

Perhaps it is useful, then, to look at “best practice” through a variety of philosophical orientations in order to examine the implications of the underlying epistemology and logic for the construct. In order to do so, it must be understood that the designation of a best practice is ideally based on empirical evidence of superior effectiveness as determined by rigorous scientific research (Simmons, 2001) and consistently delivers improved performance that can be clearly defined and measured (Buttonwood Group, 2004). In education, use of the term, “best practice,” has grown out of the education reform and standards movement (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998), and its use in medicine is often invoked as an exemplar for an evidence-based practice toward which education should strive (Beghetto, 2003; Reyna, 2002; Slavin, 2002; Whitehurst, 2002). In other words, there is a movement within education in general to define “what works” (USDE, 2001) based on the best available evidence. While seemingly a worthy endeavor, difficulty emerges as practitioners and researchers disagree about what constitutes evidence, how and if scientific rigor should be determined, and the importance of measurable outcomes. These disagreements are at the very heart of the idea of a set of best practices, and may best be understood through the various philosophical orientations outlined below.

Realist and Pragmatic Orientations to Education

According to Ozmon & Craver (2003), the essential approach of realism is that of seeking understanding of the world through scientific investigation and rigorous methods of inquiry. Truth and principles exist independent of the mind, and it is through the application of the scientific methods that such truths are discovered. Educational realists tend to emphasize the practical side of education, support competency standards and accountability, define progress in terms of measurable outcomes, and promote specialization within the field. Language of current educational policy, including but not limited to the No Child Left Behind act (USDE, 2001), is clearly realist in orientation. And as business models continue to influence educational practice, and education is seen as a product that is delivered to the client or customer (Rowe et al., 1993), it makes sense to also take from the business world the idea of “best practices” that should govern the day to day operations and processes. Thus, a set of best practices is likely to not only resonate with educators, policy-makers, and those members of the general public who hold a realist orientation, but are most likely sought and written by such individuals and groups as well.

Pragmatists also seek out processes that work to achieve a desired end, but are more likely than their realist counterparts to insist upon a rigorous scientific methodology and are less interested in discovering eternal truth. Instead, induction, a recognition of the importance of human experience, and the relationship between science and culture are hallmarks of the pragmatist view. As noted by William James (1931), such a viewpoint necessarily avoids radical empiricism and denies the existence of an immutable, absolute version of truth independent of experience. And so, while those with a pragmatic view of education are also thus likely to support and welcome a set of best practices for education, it is not without the understanding that context and individual experiences

will influence the extent to which any practice will work in a given situation. Pragmatists, much more so than realists, are also quick to recognize that what is best today is unlikely to be best tomorrow (Ilsley, 2003).

Post-Modern Orientations to Education

Unlike both the realist and pragmatist, for whom the idea of discovering what works holds promise and allure, the educator with a post-modern orientation is suspicious of grand narratives, "...stories cultures tell themselves about their own practices and beliefs in order to legitimate them. They function as a unified single story that purports to justify a set of practices, a cultural self-image, a discourse or an institution" (Lyotard, 1995, p. iv). For those with a post-modern orientation, it is not just the empiricism and guise of scientific objectivity underlying best practices that is problematic (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). In educational research there is always present to some degree the subjectivity; researchers can never eliminate from the scientific process the presence of their own experiences, beliefs, and assumptions. It is also that the insistence on an empirical method for discovering a set of principles or truths begs for an authoritarian answer when none exists. Thus, there are many sources of knowledge, none of which has particular authority over another (Popper, 1965), and by insisting on a rigorous scientific methodology that precisely defines outcomes of interest, much that is interesting and relevant in education is lost (Phillips & Burbules). It is not that the post-modern educator denies or otherwise eschews research and empirically derived forms of practice. But such individuals are likely to recognize the limitations of this base of knowledge given the variety of individual and collective experiences relevant to the educational, cultural, and political values at work. And, as Popkewitz notes (1999), the increasing migration of people because of war and economics, the rise of social movements, and the internal political visibility of ethnic identities call into question the systems of representation through which identities are constructed as well as the social value of diversity (p. 35). The debates about knowledge are not only about who tells the "truth" but about the rules on which the truth is based and the existence of multiple realities. For postmodernists, then, to invoke a set of best practices in education is to leverage power for the purpose of exerting control over the individual and society and should be critically analyzed in order to expose the political and social forces at work.

In his discussion of policy studies, Scheurich (1997) describes positivist approaches such as those embodied by the realist and pragmatist orientations as often centered on evaluating program outcomes intended to ameliorate some social problem (e.g., failing schools). Post-positivist approaches, on the other hand, "...conceive of policies as symbolic and interpretive rather than as efficient solutions designed to solve society's ills (Kelly & Maynard-Moody, 1993, p. 135). Scheurich points out that both the positivists and post-positivists approach policy analysis with an implicit commitment to the larger worldview in which they exist, and see themselves as "...important contributors to the maintenance of education and society" (p. 96). The existence of and/or underlying cause of the social problem in question is rarely examined, and the idea that substantial social problems are an indication that the social order itself should be changed is not addressed at all. At its very core, best practices are borne of the idea that standards of practice must be defined and preserved in order to maintain the existence of institutions, and improve desired outcomes. Yet, exactly what the desired outcomes are or should be are not often considered.

Reconstructionism and "Best Practices" in Educational Administration

It may be considered by some to be fairly ironic that the best practices movement in education grew out of the educational reform movement of the 1990s (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998). To reform would seem to imply forming anew, and yet, the best practices espoused by the authors seem to convey little that is innovative or distinct from essential teaching practices. This case can serve as a cautionary note as educational administrators seek to define best practices even in the face of biting criticism of university-based leadership preparation programs (Levine, 2005). Toffler (1980) argues that most colleges and universities base their teaching on the tacit assumption that tomorrow's world will be much like today's; thus, students are educated not for a future time but for the past. As university-based programs in educational administration are challenged as to the relevance and necessity of their courses and curricula, it is important to think critically about the extent to which best practices can further the profession rather than hinder growth and perpetuate the status quo. If programs in educational administration are to be reconstructed so as to meet the demands of contemporary education and society,

which practices are, in fact, best- and for whom and under what circumstances? What practices are necessary and sufficient for preparing leaders to be agents of change (Fullan, 1992), to reconstruct education to meet the changing needs of a quickly evolving and increasingly diverse population of students, and how are best practices meaningfully distinct?

CONCLUSION

The term “best practice” often invokes a sense of cynicism among practitioners of various professions. For example, Stubbington (2004) defines best practice as a completely fatuous concept that is based on two dangerous assumptions: that someone else knows what is best, and that one does not have to consider context. James Bach (2004) insists that the concept of best practice should be eliminated entirely for several reasons. First, he states, there is no practice that is better than all other practices regardless of context. It also has a chilling effect on progress and intellectual creativity as it becomes a substitute for the more difficult but ultimately more powerful idea of learning one’s craft through experience. Finally, excellence cannot be attained by simply copying what others say they do, and it reduces responsibility for the quality of one’s work to mere responsibility for the quality of following instructions. Although still somewhat cynical about the idea, Ilsley (2003) summarizes several fundamentals for the development of best practice, outlined below:

If best practice is to have any meaning, it cannot be a vague, intangible concept. Best practice must be defined.

Best practice must be measurable and attainable.

There is no single ‘best practice.’ Different organizations are particularly effective at different things, and what will work best in one situation depends, in part, on what the strengths and weaknesses are for that particular organization.

Organizations are in a constant state of flux, and yesterday’s best practice is unlikely to be effective today or tomorrow in the same way that today’s best practice must evolve to meet the demands of tomorrow.

Best means best, and if the practice is something that is necessary or standard procedure, then it is not best practice but common practice.

Finally, every organization is unique, and a best practice model cannot be effectively introduced without adapting it to circumstances.

He concludes with the point that the most beneficial use is to accelerate progress by beginning with a best practice model as a template from which to start and through which innovative practice that meets the needs and directions of the particular organization may emerge. Thus, it is hoped that those who prepare educational leaders will critically examine best practices in scholarship, teaching, and service with an understanding of both the philosophical underpinnings of the proposition and the importance of considering relevance for the context and directions of the program itself.

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Hope Replenished: Exceptional Scholarship Strides in Educational Administration

Carol A. Mullen

For decades now, critics have viewed educational leadership and administration as sorely lacking in many respects—including as a field of scholarly inquiry. Murphy, Hawley, and Young (2005) cite numerous studies that have “assessed the profession and judged it to be in poor health” (p. 49). Thomas Sergiovanni, another leading scholar, has recognized that “one shortcoming of ours in educational administration is that we’re still working on becoming a rigorous science. We need to produce lines of inquiry and people who can commit to a set of ideas over the long haul” (as cited in Mullen, 2005, p. 41).

The Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation (2005) — sponsored by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA); American Educational Research Association / Administration, Organization, and Leadership (AERA, Division A); AERA Teaching in Educational Administration Special Interest Group (SIG); and National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) acknowledges that, despite its shortcomings, the educational leadership profession has made “important strides” (¶ 1). Notably, faculty throughout the United States have been aligning “program content with national leadership standards, providing strong practical experiences, researching their practice, and building a base of knowledge on leadership education” (Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation, ¶ 1). Accordingly, this article takes a modest step.

The purpose of this discussion is to highlight some of the best scholarly practices in our field as determined by empirically developed themes and peer-based feedback. It is hoped that the structure provided for grouping best practice exemplars will stimulate readers to add others that follow rigorous standards for selection, resulting in a comprehensive resource of current developments.

Before continuing, I wish to acknowledge the critical insight I received after having solicited the exemplars, nation-wide, from faculty. A professor from a premier research institution briefly addressed the absolutism implied in “best practice”:

I’m not a believer in “best practice” because it implies there is one best way, which takes us right back to Frederick Taylor. There is no one “best” way to do anything. And most of what we think are best practices have not really been empirically validated. They just *seem* to work.

My request for a single best practice produced, from many faculty, not one but rather numerous examples that function in conjunction with one another. Further, some survey respondents indicated that the best practice they wished to highlight resided upon the pioneering efforts of others. Faculty also asserted that not only research and publication but also teaching and program redesign initiatives that support student development and success constitute an important aspect of scholarship. Honoring all of these perspectives, I have folded them into the “best practice” scholarship typology presented here.

BACKGROUND AND METHODS

As an educational leadership professor intent on studying the scholarly life and aspects of our profession, herein I reveal promising scholarly trends anchored in peer-based criteria and examples denoting excellence. The best practices I describe were determined by using communitywide, validated scholarly criteria recently established through a national survey of leadership professors (Mullen, 2004). These feature significant and broad impact on scholarship and the field, national and multiple spheres of influence, and mentoring and multi-authoring systems. Exceptional scholarship also connects administrative leadership and the improvement of teaching/learning to inform policy and practice. These norms, generated from 2002 to 2003 and published in 2004, were validated in 2005 through interviews with leading scholars, their referrals, and document analysis (Mullen, 2005).

For this discussion, I used the established scholarly criteria to identify outstanding scholarship (best practices) through such venues as publishing outlets and manuscripts, national-level professional associations and councils, as well as major or award-winning publications, programs, and innovations (national and state, institutional and individual). Additionally, in a survey taking the form of a letter of inquiry, 76 educational leadership professors working at major research institutions throughout North America were contacted to provide examples; approximately 50% (38) responded between December 2005 and February 2006. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Survey-Based Letter to Faculty Eliciting Best Practices in Educational Leadership (Mullen, 2005).

Dear X:

For a forthcoming publication, I will be describing “best practices” in educational leadership and administration. The best practices I identify should be scholarly, impact the field in some way, and illustrate relevant exemplary work in research, teaching, or service.

There is a lot of good work in progress around the country. Perhaps you can give an example that might help to broaden or deepen the sample I plan to represent.

Can you identify one best practice in the field, as you see it, and provide reasons for your selection? Also supply documentation (e.g., report, article, website, reflection) along the lines of evidence (empirical or narrative) for substantiating the claim that this is a best practice.

So that I can consider your nomination, please email me three specific contributions:

1. Identification of a best practice
2. Reasons for your selection
3. Support/documentation

The professors were selected on the basis of their national leadership as directors and presidents of professional associations and councils, as well as their reputation as established journal editors and highly productive scholars. I generated the list of names by consulting the same sources (e.g., professional associations) as those used for identifying best practices. Unless otherwise identified, the personal communications shared are attributable to the faculty respondents.

Regarding the best practice descriptions, I wrote each of these myself using the descriptive information provided by the faculty respondents. With respect to member checking, after the completion of the best practice blurbs I returned to the faculty respondents to determine the accuracy of my interpretation and to receive feedback on what I had prepared.

BEST PRACTICE TYPOLOGY AND EXEMPLARS

Upon examining the exemplars submitted by the educational leadership professors, I soon realized that these best practices represented various stages of development, some highly established, others emergent but promising. In addition to fulfilling at least one of the broad scholarly criteria previously mentioned, each example is

supported by peer-based evidence, whether empirical or narrative. To clarify, while I have knowledge of some of the best practices documented, this is not the case for the majority. However, the examples that were used to illustrate were all “backed” by established leaders who attested to their credibility and significance. Those that follow have all been classified; however, many fit more than one theme.

Significant and Broad Impact on Scholarship and the Field

Leadership Program Redesign and Delivery

Sets of standards for educational leadership, often generated through collaboration between professional associations and universities, are in use by many American states and institutions to restructure and assess preparation programs (UCEA, AERA, and NCPEA leaders, n.d.). In 1996 the influential Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium / Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ISLLC/ELCC), headed by Joseph Murphy, created “Standards for School Leaders,” birthing what supporters would consider a “best practice.” These national standards were designed for compatibility with and adopted by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (Murphy, 2005). The changing role of administrative curriculum leadership is a central premise, specifically focusing on “curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement” as related to student outcomes (EAD [Educational Administration] Assessment, ISLLC Cognitive Matrix, 1998–2003, p. 1). Among other related activities, departmental faculty are working with others to align the standards with stakeholders’ expectations, primarily school districts, in order to produce workforce-ready leaders.

One such example is the Delaware Department of Education’s Aspiring School Leader Internship Program, funded by the Wallace Foundation as part of the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP). The partners involved in this educational enterprise are Delaware’s school districts, Wilmington College, University of Delaware, and Delaware State University. The SAELP project offers a comprehensive approach to best practice that incorporates the mentorship of administrator interns by exemplary leaders; theory–practice integration with emphasis on “real school problems”; and succession planning for developing a more diversified pool of qualified candidates to lead Delaware schools (Wilson, 2005, p. 1).

A seminar, an important component of the program (scheduled at the beginning and again at the end of the internship experience) focuses on “school culture; the collaborative nature of schools/districts; and decision-making,” in addition to the principal–intern teams and their resolution of problems (Wilson, 2005, p. 8). Consistent with the policy aspects of this initiative, it is expected that “recommendations will be made to the Faculty Senate of each university to make the internship experience a mandatory requirement as part of the practicum experience” (p. 2). Once teacher leaders are identified, they receive “professional development and clinical experiences that will give them the experience and knowledge to move into school leadership positions” (p. 1).

Another model of practice that is grounded in the ISLLC/ELCC Standards is “comprehensive professional development programs for assistant principals” (Oliver, 2005, p. 96). Based on a study of the principalship and, more broadly, standards-led best practice, Oliver found that practicing assistant principals at all grade levels in Orange County, California, were involved in “district-sponsored professional development activities” (p. 93). However, deviation from the ideal practice became apparent, as these opportunities mostly favored a managerial approach to professional development over a learning focus.

Additionally, Southeastern Louisiana University has partnered with six school districts to form the Southeastern Partnership, a collaboration devoted to “implementing systemic change in school leadership preparation,” and to fulfilling such specific goals as “meeting the need for highly qualified leaders,” “preparing leaders for low-performing schools,” and increasing student achievement (Wallace Foundation Grant, 2005, pp. 1, 4). Toward this end, the Partnership has developed an “innovative educational leadership model” (p. 2). It spearheads university–district collaboration, best practices (e.g., district-based professional libraries that foster learning for staff and professional development delivered by outside consultants), and an academy for the preparation of prospective school leaders.

The Louisiana Leadership Excellence through Administrator Development (LaLEAD) academy is a master’s degree program that the Wallace Foundation not only funds but also deems “a model that should be adopted

by departments of educational leadership” (faculty respondent). The LaLEAD cohort program “was created to recruit and select candidates for the program” by way of “tapping” teachers for leadership via teacher leader workshops that focus on the role of site-based leadership in improving schools (Wallace Foundation Grant, 2005, p. 4). Workshop courses (e.g., Research Methods, Technology for Leadership) are matched to the Louisiana Principal Standards and the ISLLC/ELCC Standards. Candidates’ leadership skills are assessed through such means as self-assessments and portfolios. The two major strategies employed for reaching the goals of the Partnership and academy are “improv[ing] the conditions for recruiting, preparing, and supporting school leaders” and “[fostering] leader development,” each of which is supported by a complex series of actions similar to those mentioned here (Wallace Foundation Grant, p. 12, 20).

Continued planning efforts utilize the redesigned leadership preparation program (e.g., leadership academy) and its implementation plan. These include the involvement of teachers and cohorts each semester, with the pilot program occurring in fall 2005. It is expected that leadership aspirants will, for example, fully engage in “job-embedded leadership activities and professional development that lead toward improved student achievement in the targeted school” (Wallace Foundation Grant, p. 24).

Studying the Principalship and Superintendency

A well-developed best practice cited was the UCEA Voices Project, which continues the work that Frances Kochan of Auburn University and colleagues began years earlier (see Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 1999). Several respondents noted that this scholarly work has had an impact on the field by sharing perspectives of superintendents and principals, by engaging researchers in making bare their philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, and by focusing findings on the implications for improving preparation programs in multiple contexts and regions.

The initial study phase, known as “a thousand voices from the firing line” (Kochan et al., 1999) (later renamed Voices 1), “investigated vexing problems of practice that principals and superintendents discussed in one-on-one interviews” (Acker-Hocevar & Ivory, 2005, p. 11). Acker-Hocevar and Ivory (2005) further explain that Voices 2 “consisted of focus groups with principals and superintendents” and used question protocols dealing with preparation, expectations, and challenges. Voices 3, a large-scale qualitative study currently under way, explores educational leaders’ “conceptions of school improvement (doing what’s best for students), democratic community (voice in decision making), and social justice (overcoming obstacles to do what is best for kids)” (p. 11).

Voices 3 of the project was commended for bringing together faculty to collaborate on learning how practitioners think about reform, community, and justice. The Voices project in its entirety was nominated as a best practice, largely because “it assists new professors to make connections to a larger scholarly community in order to investigate problems of interest to educational leadership and administration.” Additionally, the data from the Voices project have accumulated into “a longitudinal database” permitting many scholars to examine perspectives over time and to use their own “interpretive frameworks.”

The Voices project was also recognized for the “partnership learning and collaboration” it encourages “across institutions of higher learning with different missions and types of programs.” It was believed that faculty who work together to create research that is publicly shared open their work to the critical gaze that promotes genuine dialogue, critique, and improvement: “One of the ways to impact our field is to conduct more of these broad-based studies that support more inclusiveness and openness.” The respondents concluded by asserting that this type of collaborative research, integral to the health of our profession, will become more prevalent in the face of decreased funding for institutions.

Moral Leadership Modeled and Practiced

Intertwining moral leadership and social organization, Sergiovanni has spearheaded the notion of purposes and ideas as “covenant,” not “contract,” to school communities. A goal is for constituent groups “to work together to figure out what it is that they need to do in order to embody their promises” (as cited in Mullen, 2005, p. 51). Sergiovanni (1992) has turned the covenant idea into a best practice within schools, engaging constituent groups in the development of their own promises. In one exercise, people create posters listing promises they

have developed and display them. One poster might outline five promises made to the children, while another might list five promises the children have made to the adults, and so forth. Through this grassroots but comprehensive decision-making process, “people gather and make promises. If you don’t want to be a fink, you’re morally obliged to keep those” (as cited in Mullen, 2005, p. 50). Once a group has empowered itself to function according to its own covenants, it can transcend the authoritarian role of principals (and others) as enforcers of rules and expectations. Hence, according to Sergiovanni (as cited in Mullen, 2005), the ideas themselves and the collective become a source of authority. Fewer people will be telling others what to do, and more will be focused on ideas. While this is truer in families, in schools norms and traditions can also emerge that have a sacred quality, binding people in moral ways.

Adapted from the League of Professional Schools and grounded in the work of Thomas Sergiovanni, Carl Glickman, and Lew Allen, Pounder, Reitzug, and Young (2002) underscore covenant development as a worthwhile practice in educating students about the value of fostering “supportable beliefs” (p. 264) for continually examining one’s practice. The writing of a “covenant of beliefs,” especially collaboratively, assists aspiring leaders in connecting their beliefs and daily practices and in studying the “congruency” between these (p. 265).

One faculty respondent shared that he and his colleagues use the covenant assignment, approached as a group-based project, in their educational leadership program. The master’s students’ covenants are expected to address the following three components:

Knowledge statements (what we know from research and other professional literature about good classrooms, good schools, and teaching and learning); *evidence summary* (a literature-supported summary that provides the argument and evidence for the knowledge statement); and “*sacred*” *commitments* (the values, beliefs, or practices that are sacred in your fictional school, that is, that guide and drive practice).

Students make sacred commitments, for example, by using the template provided through their courses to develop statements about their values, beliefs, and practices. The covenant assignment, as used by this professor respondent, honors both what we know from research (knowledge statements and evidence summary) as well as what student practitioners believe is most important of all the things we know. Used in this way, the covenant neither legitimates knowledge in the absence of values, nor values in the absence of knowledge, but rather requires beliefs and values to be grounded in knowledge.

National and Multiple Spheres of Influence

Leadership Preparation Knowledge Base

The Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation (2005) supports “mak[ing] widely available the conceptual and research base on leadership education” (p. 1). Toward this end, the taskforce has conceptualized 10 flexible domains for reflecting research in the field:

1. leadership education as a field of study
2. the context of leadership education
3. models and theories of leadership education
4. recruitment, selection, and development of leadership candidates
5. providers of leadership education
6. curriculum and pedagogy in leadership education
7. the delivery of leadership preparation
8. student assessment and program evaluation
9. professional learning
10. leadership education around the globe

Domain leaders work with taskforce researchers to determine what is known about each domain, as well as to identify gaps in leadership preparation.

The NCPEA/Knowledge Base Connexions Project, a recent initiative, also received support via the survey responses. Leadership professors included documentation that described the various aspects of the program and explained its impact on the field. The aim of this project is “to add to the knowledge base of the educational administration profession” and “aid in the improvement of administrative theory and practice, as well as administrative preparation programs” (NCPEA Project Executive Editorial Board, p. 8; also NCPEA website, 2005). A unique organizational structure (i.e., project executive editorial board, NCPEA board of directors, executive director of NCPEA, domain coordinators, and board of reviewers) supports a publishing network drawing together professors from different institutions. The module submission and review process involves these basic steps: after an author submits a “module”—that is, an article, case study, annotated literature review, or other—the appropriate domain coordinator “establishes a panel to review the module according to the NCPEA standards”; once reviewers complete the review, the module may receive endorsement or require changes (NCPEA Project Executive Editorial Board, 2005, p. 3).

Project leaders are currently building, cost-free, a library of easily searchable refereed modules (professional materials) made available at the NCPEA website. Authors’ juried “modules” are expected to shape more than 18 specific knowledge domains that include educational leadership preparation, organizational change, research methods, and site-based leadership (NCPEA Project Executive Editorial Board, 2005).

Organizational Leadership and Change

Also viewed as best practice was the development of charter districts, sometimes called virtual districts. The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and Aspire schools were the two outstanding examples named. While supportive of this educational trend, the respondent who identified it cautioned:

These organizations are moving beyond the single charter school and establishing central organizations for many charters. It is not yet obvious whether these schools are better than regular schools, but there is clearly a very different ethos among those leading them, especially the ability to develop a uniform vision and approach.

For example, Aspire Schools open and operate “K–12 public charter schools in California, with emphasis on low-income communities” and serve five California counties where students “receive a high-quality education to prepare them for college.” These small schools have a college-preparatory focus, and results apparently “demonstrate the positive impact that Aspire has on students, parents and the community: Established Aspire schools exceeded the state’s academic growth target by almost four times” (Aspire Public Schools, 2005).

The Knowledge is Power Program, a national nonprofit organization, recruits outstanding school leaders to found and operate middle schools in educationally underserved neighborhoods across America. KIPP academies are:

free open enrollment college-preparatory public schools where . . . students develop the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed in top quality schools [and the workplace]. Ninety percent of KIPP students are African American or Latino. . . . Students are accepted regardless of prior academic record, conduct, or socioeconomic background. (KIPP Schools in Action: Overview, 2005)

It is reported that these schools balance rigorous college preparatory instruction and extracurricular activities, such as music. Furthermore:

KIPP Schools begin from scratch with just one grade level, starting with the fifth grade. This gradual growth helps develop an enduring culture of high expectations among students, parents, and staff. KIPP Schools add one grade each year until they reach full capacity. (KIPP Schools in Action: Overview, 2005).

University–District Partnerships

Faculty respondents who asserted that neither universities nor districts can effectively bridge the theory–practice gap unless they work interdependently nominated outstanding university–district partnerships. Notably, the Principals Excellence Program (PEP), sponsored by the University of Kentucky and Pike County

Public Schools (a rural district), is a federally funded, postcertification leadership development program for principals, assistant principals, and teachers eligible to assume administrative positions. The PEP curriculum is built upon the ISLLC standards. PEP was featured by the U.S. Department of Education as one of six unique initiatives, giving it national recognition as a leader in school leadership development. Its program goals focus on “transforming the principalship and expanding the candidate pool” (Browne-Ferrigno, 2005, p. 7). The e-Lead website (2005b) adds that, from 2003 to 2004, “the partnership delivered intensive yearlong leadership development for two cohorts of practicing principals and prospective candidates holding administrator certification.” Moreover, “program objectives and accompanying strategies addressed recruitment, development, and retention as means to reculture the principalship” (e-Lead, 2005).

Browne-Ferrigno and Knoeppel (2005) also explain that a closed-cohort model, one favoring stability in membership, was used to serve both practicing and aspiring principals in Kentucky through “an interconnected series of seminar-workshops, clinical experiences guided by trained mentors, comprehensive school-based research, and structured reflections” (p. 6). The program supports role-identity transformation and socialization into the community of administrative practice, the placement of PEP-trained individuals (succession planning), and the impact of program development on specific goals. Cohort members’ survey feedback indicated that the program has aided in their preparation as future school leaders through such means as research-based decision making and, importantly, “equitable learning opportunities for all students” (Browne-Ferrigno & Knoeppel, p. 13).

A compounded best practice exemplar came from several faculty who referenced a list of promising, nationwide professional development programs available via e-Lead (2005b), a Washington-based collaborative that links institutes for student success and educational leadership. The curricula of these programs are “driven by authoritative standards for what principals need to know and be able to do.” The following programs have apparently fulfilled these criteria, representing best practices in institution-led, collaborative forms of school-based practical scholarship. (I have paraphrased the original information provided.)

The University of Michigan’s Flint-Based Urban Principals Academy provides urban principal preparation and professional development that enhances the learning of practicing principals of high-needs urban schools and identifies teachers and others with high potential for urban school leadership and stimulates their interest in educational administration.

Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS) and New Administrators Project (NAP) / New Teacher Center (NTC), University of California, Santa Cruz, train professional leadership coaches to work with novice and veteran principals. This training is available nationally. NTC also supports networks of school leadership coaches. NAP is a regional project that provides direct induction services to beginning principals.

First Ring Leadership Academy, Cleveland State University in Partnership with the First Ring, School Superintendents Collaborative—has created a one-of-a-kind collaboration. The 13 First Ring School Districts surrounding Cleveland joined Cleveland State University’s College of Education and Human Services to create a leadership academy for aspiring and current school leaders. The First Ring Leadership Academy is an alternative route to principal licensure and recertification, and members benefit from state-of-the-art licensure, career networking, and renewal opportunities.

Illinois Technology and Leadership for Change (ITLC), Illinois State University, focuses on effective leadership by providing frameworks, dialogue, and practical applications of continuous improvement strategies for educational leaders. ITLC advocates data-driven decision making as the basis of effective continuous improvement for individuals and schools. This is a “trainer of trainers” model, as each participant is a staff developer nurturing capacity for leadership and improved student achievement.

LEAD Fairfax, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia, promotes systemic reform of educational leadership. This program is designed to better enable education leaders to impact student achievement, especially for the economically disadvantaged. Critical attributes of LEAD Fairfax include individual leadership development plans; cohort learning experiences; national partnership with such organizations as the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP); and intern placement (administrative and preservice) in selected schools with mentor principals.

Other examples include the following.

The National Institute for School Leadership, Inc. (NISL) / National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE).

The New School Leadership Program (NSLP) / University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

The Principal Leadership Program for Rural Multicultural Schools Across Northern New Mexico (LeadNM), University of New Mexico.

The Leadership Curriculum Module Training, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

The Tuscaloosa School Leadership Program, Tuscaloosa City School System and University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

In order to align theory with practice, university/district teams were created through another project. The learner-centered leadership program is, as Arnold Danzig and his colleagues (as cited in Kiltz, Danzig, & Szecsy, 2004) of Arizona State University describe, “a new initiative that provides professional development opportunities to school administrators through a mentoring model” (p. 135). Teaching and learning are the focal points within this model, melded to the commitment to develop school leadership expertise through cohorts. Learner-centered leadership, identified as a best practice, can be traced to the life’s work of Joseph Murphy (as cited in Mullen, 2005) and colleagues, which involves having “repositioned our understanding of school leadership away from simply organization and management, governance, and politics to what we have called instructional leadership and learner-centered leadership” (p. 41).

Grant-funded and assessed, Arizona’s learner-centered leadership program brings together aspiring and practicing school administrators from across four high-need urban districts. The various stages of the mentoring process highlight relationship building through such means as communications technology, formal and informal sessions, and team-building using problem-solving strategies. A subsequent mentoring stage focuses on action and mentor planning. Appraisal of the pilot program drew attention to its strengths (e.g., establishing a strong foundation for developing interdistrict relationships) and weaknesses (e.g., creating the capacity for mentoring and for viewing oneself, whether a mentor or mentee, as a learner). For more information about this program, including goals and results, see e-Lead (2005a).

Another best practice highlights Temple University’s Laboratory for Student Success (LSS), a nationally funded collaborative serving the Mid-Atlantic region that the U.S. Department of Education designated “as the lead laboratory in the specialty area of educational leadership” (LSS, 2005). Its primary goals are “to revitalize and reform educational practices in the service of student success” and “to enact and sustain lasting systemic educational reform through collaborative programs of applied research and development and services to the field.”

Mentoring and Multiauthoring Systems

Junior Faculty Outreach

(See UCEA Voices Project, described earlier.)

Leadership Studies Cohorts

(See LaLEAD and PEP, previously covered.) Faculty respondents highlighted scholarly examples of best practice in the form of constructivist teaching approaches to program redesign and cultural change. Outstanding master’s and doctoral cohorts demonstrate study of the realities of leadership and engagement in inquiry. These also reflect the importance of forging collaborative relationships with schools and districts and merging theory and practice, in addition to valuing learning-centered leadership focused on reform, community, and justice.

In one such example, while taking a synthesis course together, 16 doctoral cohort members prepared essays on their own learning and transformation (Harris, 2005). They reflected on what they believed at the outset and toward the end of their doctoral programs, and within the context of their own professional practice. Mentoring

is a thread that appears throughout the essays, sometimes explicitly but usually implicitly. Cited as instances were the readings studied in their classes and the dialogue that ensued about theory/practice integration and specifically school improvement, democratic community, and social justice.

One student noted that the doctoral program had helped him find “the words, knowledge, and concepts” for better addressing how to cope in complex educational environments (Harris, 2005, p. 44). Another commented that while he had long been interested in having his school change significantly, it was through this process that he finally had the “vocabulary to identify” (p. 31) what was needed to begin this task.

The 16 student writers identified mentorship as best practice and associated it with continued learning and an improved world. According to them, being encouraged to make meaningful connections through active reading and authentic dialogue supported their personal and professional growth and enhanced their capacity for learning. Reflection was viewed as a related best practice: Through reflective inquiry in the form of thinking and writing about experiences, the students’ conceptualization of learning deepened; in fact, they became “more understanding of the richness inherent in learning itself” (p. 164).

A long-standing mentoring cohort, the Writers in Training (WIT) doctoral program, received a state award for excellence in instructional supervision in 2005. This initiative has also been recognized by higher education journals as a leading exemplar of adult cohort mentoring that supports women and minorities, in particular, in achieving their scholastic goals (*School Leadership News*, 2005). Led by an educational studies professor from the University of South Florida, the WIT cohort has the dual agenda of preparing doctoral students as both dissertation researchers and scholar–practitioners who connect theory and practice and who reflect on issues of reform, community, and justice. The WITs participate in research projects, copresent at conferences, coauthor articles (in, e.g., *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly* and *Teacher Education and Practice*), and serve as assistant editors for an international journal.

The WIT program combines the best attributes of informal mentoring with structured components (e.g., bi-monthly meetings, turn taking, and guidelines for producing work found in formal heuristics). Because the university calendar does not dictate when and where the protégés meet—one draw of a noninstitutionalized cohort structure—sessions are flexibly arranged over the duration of a student’s program. Each meeting has a student-driven agenda to which individuals add their work (e.g., literature reviews, research instruments, dissertation proposals and chapters) as needed and on a rotational basis.

Assisted Learning in Doctoral Education

Several respondents saw “assisted learning” as a “fundamental best practice” of their doctoral programs. It is also an underlying principle of the mentoring cohort model. Assisted learning, they explained, is grounded in behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, and constructivist psychological theory. Furthermore, someone explained that:

in assisted learning the professor provides all of the support that students need to learn how to effectively perform a task. As the students acquire the knowledge, skill, and disposition to perform the task, the teacher’s assistance is gradually withdrawn. The result is that the students can eventually perform the task by themselves.

This faculty member’s references to doctoral education and reform contextualized the process of assisted learning, drawing attention to the fact that “doctoral students need to learn how to write effectively within the field’s protocols.” Using the direct instruction format that guides professional writing, his classes “deconstruct assigned readings” and, using assessment rubrics, write papers on the course content. The students learn about professional writing and the publication process itself. In this phase, “the best practices employed are assisted learning, mastery learning, faculty mentoring, scaffolding, incrementally shaping behavior, and facilitating the development of professional self-worth and self-efficacy.”

After completing individual papers, the students write collaboratively, “facilitating their ability to effectively synthesize previous scholarly references in the construction of their argument.” This process prepares them for developing such “tight scholarly documents” as the dissertation proposal, leading “to higher quality dissertations and scholarly writing.” This “professional development opportunity” also benefits faculty in the program who “fine-tune their own writing” and “become better teachers and mentors.”

Based on the teaching exemplars received that support mentoring and multiauthoring systems, it appears that

these are all grounded in or supported by the following processes.

For Students

- Reflecting on changing leadership practices.
- Developing a sense of identity and belonging.
- Supporting the learning and attainment of dreams.
- Experiencing a vibrant faculty–student support model.
- Engaging in peer and faculty mentoring.

For Teachers

- Breaking a complex task into smaller increments to ensure mastery and success (through a form of continuous progress and appropriate scaffolding, prompting, and modeling).
- Shaping students' behavior from a generalized understanding to the specific ability to write professionally.
- Helping students find their “voice” through writing, inquiry, and student-driven agendas.
- Approaching learning from a social-constructivist philosophy (with attention to developing students' self-concept and self-efficacy in relation to scholarly writing and the conventions of professionalism as defined by the field).
- Engaging in student and faculty mentoring.

REFLECTION AND CONCLUDING NOTE

This chapter provides a sample of best practices that help strengthen the educational leadership profession, along with a template that readers can use for further identifying what is known about our field. Perspectives on best scholarly practices regarding the blended realities of teaching, research, and service were illustrated. School improvement, democratic community, and social justice emerged as themes structuring and authenticating most of the models presented, just as these serve as beacons guiding critical approaches to inquiry and the reculturing of our profession (Murphy, 2002).

Hope may have been replenished in the process of uncovering exemplars that build upon what has come before and that are useful and cutting edge. Based on what faculty have reported earlier (Mullen, 2004), in our profession we are concerned with impacting scholarship and the field, with contributing to national and multiple spheres of influence, and with developing mentoring and multiauthoring systems. The feedback provided by leading professors confirms these criteria of excellence and our collective focus on two overarching agendas: adding to the knowledge base of educational administration and improving administrative theory and practice.

Notably, we are busy channeling energy into reculturing our university preparation programs and school systems by, for instance, providing for the mentoring of administrator interns, as well as pursuing theory–practice integration. In addition, we seek to learn, through action and survey research, the perspectives of superintendents and principals on critical issues. We are also expecting one another, as researchers, to be forthcoming about our philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. Another point—just as we know that our preparation programs must emphasize learning and learning-centered leadership over managerial and outdated models, we recognize that district-led professional development for leadership aspirants should sponsor more of a learning focus rooted in a nonauthoritarian ideology. Toward this end, team-based belief exercises (e.g., covenant development conducted within groups) offer a tested strategy for guiding school persons as well as leadership students.

Furthermore, there is ample support among us for innovative approaches to organizational school development, particularly the new types of schools devoted to serving educationally underserved students and marginalized populations. We are developing grant-funded university–district partnerships aimed at transforming the principalship and expanding the candidate pool for addressing nation-wide administrator shortages. Learner-centered leadership programs are predicated upon the collaboration of aspiring and practicing school administrators on challenging professional agendas. Faculty are experimenting with other kinds of cohort for-

mats as well for teaching master's and doctoral students, the former in their identity development as future school leaders, and the latter as dissertation writers, and both groups as scholar-practitioners. Writing/inquiry scaffolds, assisted-and-reciprocal strategies, and collaborative projects pedagogically support cohort practices, as do "problem-based learning, case method, [and] administrative simulation teaching" (Pounder et al., p. 281).

While some criticisms of our profession *are* sound (see, e.g., UCEA, AERA, and NCPEA leaders, n.d), the prolific number and quality of exceptional scholarship practices around us signal that important work is in progress. The chronic depiction of the state of scholarship in our profession as impoverished, then, is not a completely accurate assessment. By having presented current best practices not previously categorized or integrated, I have attempted to demonstrate where scholarly growth is occurring and in what forms. This conversation-starter acts on the directions that professional associations provide for guiding our work as university faculty.

Finally, I am not proposing that professors, students, school districts, or any other constituent group adopt, "off the shelf," the developments included. Rather, benefit can be expected from dialoguing about the foundational ideas and program descriptions outlined; where appropriate, these can be utilized to address one's own context and leadership challenges. The typology of best practices—an idea-generating resource—could serve us, then, in our scholarly development and commitment to researching and improving the leadership profession.

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The Preparation of Urban Educational Leaders: Results from a Practitioner Research Study

Douglas R. Davis

INTRODUCTION

In December 2003, the educational leadership preparation program at Georgia State University, an urban university located in downtown Atlanta, committed itself to a focus on preparing effective urban educational leaders with the knowledge and skills to improve student achievement. This article presents the results of a practitioner research study (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994) conducted through participants of a doctoral-level seminar on the preparation of urban educational leaders. The purpose of the study was to collect data to enhance the academic and performance-based education provided students in the masters-level administrative certification program (Calhoun, 1994).

Georgia State University serves a metropolitan area of five million people. The school districts served by the program are undergoing demographic changes characterized by rapidly increasing economic and cultural diversity. During the process of deciding to focus on urban school leader preparation, the faculty chose to focus on high-needs schools as defined by common and available measures including low SES, high immigrant and ESOL student populations, high student turnover, and low performance on standardized tests and other measures used for school accountability. As a result of the recent demographic changes, these high-needs schools are located throughout the metropolitan area and transcend traditional notions of urban that may be linked to race and inner-city neighborhoods. The program has a stated mission of preparing educational leaders who will facilitate improved student achievement through a focus on teaching and learning processes (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990) and developing positive organizational cultures (Deal & Paterson, 1999; Fullan, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1999). As a result, key themes in the curriculum of the program include the professional work of teachers and the facilitation and support of learning organizations (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Fullan, 2001; Marks & Printy, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This article presents the results of a practitioner research study designed to assist the program in meeting the needs of students and local school systems.

The decision to focus on urban preparation followed much discussion and consideration among program faculty and college administrators. The urban commitment required changes in the program's philosophy, curriculum, delivery, administrative internships, and partnerships. Thus, the adoption of the term urban resulted in substantive changes in the program. The guiding premise of the decision to emphasize urban leadership was an assumption that there are unique characteristics and needs among urban schools and that university-based school leadership preparation programs serving these schools have an obligation to prepare leaders with knowledge and skills consistent with these characteristics and needs. Clearly, there are many reasons and benefits from better preparing effective urban educational leaders; leaders with the educational preparation and training to be successful in what are arguably very difficult educational settings. In addition, this effort is consistent with the mission of the university to serve the needs of the community in which it is housed. Nonetheless, the adoption of the term urban raised many challenging questions for the program faculty:

What is urban educational leadership?
 What separates urban educational leadership from other forms of educational leadership?
 What do urban educational leaders need to know?
 What do urban educational leaders need to be able to do?
 What should be the standards of urban educational leadership?
 What should be the program standards for the preparation of urban educational leaders?
 What should be the curriculum for a program that prepares urban educational leaders?
 What are some key readings and effective activities that should be used to prepare urban educational leaders?

As part of the program development process, the researchers decided to merge educational practice and research (Anderson, et al, 1994). Specifically, eleven participants in a doctoral-level seminar examined through the course of the entire seminar, the above questions and developed a consensus set of recommendations to inform program curricula and delivery. All of the participants were professional educators working in urban schools, all had completed a masters-level administrative certification program, and eight of the eleven were practicing urban school administrators. Participants in the seminar interviewed educational leaders, selected and reviewed research and scholarship on urban education, and participated in small and large focus group discussions.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The seminar was designed to allow students flexibility in determining the path of their own learning. Learning was premised on Applebee's (1996) assumption that discourse mediates between broad tradition and schooled knowledge. This approach was selected to avoid the instructor assuming a privileged position of knowing what and knowing how; or, what Applebee described as "knowledge-out-of-context" (p. 35). According to Applebee, collective conversation challenges traditional notions of curriculum:

Discussions of curriculum in American schools and colleges have usually focused on what is most worth knowing: Should we stress the Great Books, the richness of multiculturalism, the basic literacy needed in the worlds of work and leisure? But these arguments have been based on false premises and reflect a fundamental misconception of the nature of knowing. They strip knowledge of the contexts that give it meaning and vitality, and lead to an education that stresses knowledge-out-of-context rather than knowledge-in-action. In such a system, students are taught about the traditions of the past, and not how to enter into and participate in those of the present and future... I offer a vision of curriculum that redresses that balance, placing the emphasis on the knowledge-in-action that is at the heart of all living traditions. Such knowledge arises out of participation in ongoing conversations about things that matter, conversations that are themselves embedded within larger traditions of the discourse that we value. (p. 3)

Applebee's view of curriculum is especially well-suited to a course where the topic of urban education is the lived professional experience and tradition of the students.

A knowledge-in-action approach was appropriate because of problems with the term urban. Specifically, program faculty recognized that there are issues with the meaning and context of the term. Is urban descriptive of the type of leader prepared in the program? Is it descriptive of what leaders are prepared to do? Is it a descriptive of the context in which the educators who complete the program will work? Or, is it a polite description of difference of something or someone that is other?

Embedded within these questions, however, is a deeper issue; the use of language as a descriptor of conceptual frameworks, mission statements, organizational visions and the like is a problem. In this case, the use of urban is an example of a language problem when systematic processes seek to frame and define organizational behavior. Thus, a critical analysis of the meaning of the preparation of urban educational leaders should not be separated from a much broader problem of language. When a term such as urban is selected to define a program, there is, in a real manner, an effort to control language. Clear distinctions are being established between something that is uniquely urban and subsequently, distinctly different from that which is not urban.

The problem of language when it is used to define the purpose of a program is more than semantic. In the end, the term itself, and the meaning the term signifies for the reader or hearer, not the speaker or the writer, may recreate the very issues in need of address (Breault, & Davis, 2005). Thus, there are potential negative effects when the term urban is used as a descriptor of an educational leadership preparation program.

Certainly, the intent of the program in selecting the term urban was to solve a defined problem. There is, unquestionably, a sincere desire on the part of the program faculty to assist urban schools. Nonetheless, the focus of this theoretical discussion is not on a remedy; but rather, on the potential of the term urban to cause harm. Specifically, there is a danger in the use of the term urban in a programmatic context of objectification and systemization. There is an implied position that there is some social ill in need of a remedy: the urban problem. In many circumstances, the term urban is used as a substitute for terms such as race, poverty, or inner-city. Thus, the term urban resonates with paternalism. A remedy is needed but who or what is in need of the remedy? The program faculty cannot be in need of the remedy because it must already have it in order to provide it. In this situation, the remedy must be applied to someone or something that is both different and in need of reforming. Urban, in this case, defines, describes or establishes difference.

This leads to an additional question that needs to be asked: how is the remedy applied? The remedy, or the mission of the program is to provide an institutional plan-of-action required by the university, the state, and accreditation agencies to be written; and, as a written document, it is expected to be applied in a consistent and coherent manner. The solution requires an organizational structure. The solution requires a system. From this perspective, the idea of urban educational reform is consistent with neo-liberalism (Freire, 1993; Apple, 2001; Lemke, 2001). That is, a privileged group identifies the meaning of what is necessary, what is good, what is proper, what is education, or what is knowledge, and systematically attempts to institutionalize and produce the concurrent values.

Davis (2001) previously labeled the privileged assumption embedded in a similar type of social remedy the missionary assumption. Although this term was used in the context of colonialism, the basic assumption is the same:

The missionary assumption is a worldview that one necessarily assumes in order to attempt to convert or save another. The missionary assumption requires knowing the “right way” for others to be and the “right truth” for others to know. Further, the missionary assumption is situated within the historical context of imperialism and European domination in colonial regions. Conversion is bound in European culture and brought to indigenous peoples. Because of its interrelationship to colonial control, missionary practice is ultimately bound up in political, social, and economic power. (p. 2–3)

There are, actually, many similarities between colonial development and urban reform and not the least of which are common elements of economic, racial and cultural difference. While these commonalities are important, the uniting point here is the attempt to improve the other, or an attempt to solve a problem within a set of ideals determined by a dominate group.

The urban remedy, therefore, is intended to impact a group, or an identifiable socio-economic culture. This group remedy is similar to the school organizational process described by Sergiovanni (2000) as the colonization of the “lifeworld” by the “systemsworld.” Sergiovanni cites the philosophy of Jurgen Habermas to present the meaning of the relationship between formal organizational structures within a school and the organizational culture within a school. Sergiovanni argues that one of these is generative of the other. Thus, either the culture of the school determines the characteristic of the structure, or the structure of the school determines the characteristics of the culture. A key point is that when an educational leadership preparation program seeks to solve urban educational problems, the program is, in effect, a component of the systemsworld. There is a danger of colonizing the lifeworlds of schools.

One manner in which the term urban may impinge on the lifeworld of school is to silence emotional and controversial, although nonetheless necessary, discourse on race, class and difference. The use of urban as a substitute for politically or socially sensitive terms such as race is consistent with documented tendencies (Delpit, 1995; Rush, 2002) to speak outside of an issue. Rusch (2002) states, “The fact is that silence governs most educators’ discourse about diversity and equity” (p. 1).

When a leadership preparation program takes the moniker urban, what does this mean? The program’s faculty supported a commitment to critical education and Giroux’s (1994) call that “leadership takes up the issues

of power, culture, and identity within an ethical discourse that points to those practices between the self and others . . .” (p. 34). There was a unanimous commitment among faculty members to teaching for social justice, equity, diversity, community, and democracy (Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Maxcy, 1991). Presented in these terms, the problem for the leadership faculty is to create meaning for the term urban as it applies to the program; yet, the creation of meaning is beyond the faculty’s control. As a result, there are ethical implications involved in the epistemological assumptions necessary for a faculty to claim knowledge of how to implement what is best for schools.

We do hope to thoughtfully respond. One approach faculty members favored is a programmatic and curricula approach that is consistent with democratic, community and critically oriented perspectives (Applebee, 1994; Giroux, 1994; Maxcy, 1995; English, 2003). Thus, for the program, preparation for urban school leadership means meaningful engagement and conversation with urban educators and community members in a circular teaching and learning process. The desire is to listen and to learn.

METHODS

This practitioner research study utilized a group of urban educational leaders to define, frame, and interpret urban educational leadership. As a result, the practice part of the research occurred on two levels. First, university faculty members, acting as practitioners, studied their own program and practice. Second, advanced graduate students and urban educators also studied their own professional practice as a method of informing university practice. Anderson et al. (1994) argue that practitioner research is ideally a collaboration done with others who have a similar stake in the problem. Practitioner research encourages and supports reflective practice (Schon, 1983). Reflective practitioners, according to Anderson et al, help us “better understand how school practitioners make sense of their experiences and engage in professional learning” (p. 11). The research was also guided by a belief that professional practice cannot be understood without consideration of how practice is perceived by participants (Glanz, 1998).

The practitioner research process was the pedagogical basis for the seminar. Participants were given the set of eight questions as a broad guide to topics that would be covered in each session. The purpose and process for the seminar was explained and all eleven students agreed to participate. The seminar began with introductions where each participant was asked to share a detailed description of their professional practice. Following this, participants divided themselves into three small focus groups; two groups with four members and one group with three members. The activities in the seminar were selected through an identification of possible sources of data available to practitioners in the context of a doctoral seminar that would inform programmatic decision making (Calhoun, 1994). In order to answer the questions, participants decided to complete a series of five activities for the seminar:

1. Conduct an interview with an urban educational leader.
2. Select and review of a book of their choice on urban educational leadership.
3. Select, read, and write a reflection on a set of two or three readings (articles, book chapters, research reports, etc.) pertaining to each of the guiding questions.
4. Meet with their small focus group and prepare a set of bullets responding to the guiding question for the next seminar session.
5. Meet in the large focus group (the entire group), discuss, and reach a consensus response to each guiding question.

The following types of data were collected through this process:

- Data from eleven interviews of urban educational leaders
- A set of bullets addressing each of the guiding questions
- A comprehensive review and bibliography of important literature on urban educational leadership
- A set of eleven reviews of books on urban educational leadership
- A series of conversations on issues of urban educational leadership

The data analysis was designed to inform the program in several ways:

- To provide a set of similarities and unique characteristics of urban leadership compared to school leadership in other types of settings.
- To provide a conceptual guide for the preparation of urban educational leaders.
- To provide a set of standards for the preparation of urban educational leaders.

The data analysis process began with a compilation of the unique characteristics of urban educational leadership developed by the three small focus groups. The compiled list was presented to the entire group, discussed, and following minor modification, agreed to by the group. Next, discussions from the small and large groups, the book reviews, the interviews and reading reflections were used to expand the unique characteristics of urban leadership into a conceptual guide for urban leadership. This work was later used by the small focus groups to develop a set of program standards for the preparation of urban school leaders. Once again, the sets of standards from the three focus groups were combined into a single list of standards. The list was discussed, modified, and agreed to by the large focus group. Finally, the small focus groups took the standards and developed a list of performance-based activities and readings.

RESULTS

The practitioner research process resulted in a list of 13 unique characteristics of urban educational leadership. Participants in the seminar all felt that there are many similarities in effective leadership practices in any context. The practice of urban school leadership, however, was believed to require additional levels of expertise and ability. In addition to the duties and responsibilities all school leaders must attend to, urban schools leaders must pay particular attention to:

1. Issues of truancy, community crime, and family substance abuse.
2. A low level of available community resources and support.
3. Potential historical organizational and community norms of low expectations and low academic achievement.
4. The demand to achieve at the same level as schools with more resources, social capital, cultural capital and civic capacity.
5. The need to work to find solutions to a wide range of community and neighborhood problems.
6. The need to create mutually beneficial and respectful relationships within the varied multicultural environments of the school and community.
7. The need to develop the social and cultural capital of students.
8. The need to deal with issues within the school of student behavior and safety.
9. The challenge of meeting the needs of students who frequently move and change schools.
10. The need to meet the needs of students and communities facing language barriers, issues of poverty, and homelessness.
11. The effects of social, political and economic discrimination and structural inequalities in American society.
12. The involvement of parents in all aspects of their child's education.
13. The attraction, retention, morale, and professional growth of teachers with the skills necessary for success with urban children.

This list was the topic of intense debate. Concerns were expressed that the list represented stereotypical views of urban schools, promoted a deficit view of urban schools, fails to recognize the many positive cultural and civic characteristics of urban neighborhoods, and implies that these are problems only faced by urban schools. It was agreed upon that most schools whether urban, suburban, or rural, face some of these issues. Nonetheless, the group reached a consensus that these remain issues that most urban school leaders must address within their

professional practice. Clearly, the challenges facing urban school leaders are daunting. Given the above list, however, some key themes emerge that may guide the education of aspiring urban school leaders.

These themes constitute a conceptual guide that is used to establish learning goals, performance activities and assessments for future urban leaders. The guiding theme resulting from the study was schools-in-community (Noguera, 2003). Additional concepts are situated under the umbrella concept of schools-in-community. Supportive concepts include the recognition that the task is too large for any single school, administrator, or administrative team to accomplish. Thus, focused distributed leadership is essential (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In addition, it was a consensus that while all students can learn and that all schools can improve student achievement, issues of poverty and economic inequality make it impossible for schools to eliminate the achievement gap by themselves (Rothstein, 2004). A wide range of services external to the school, or outside of traditional school roles, are needed to meet the needs of low performing children and schools. Thus, a final conceptual theme was the recognition that professional educators, not just administrators, have a broad community role to play outside of the school (Shipps, 2003). The needs of urban education support the preparation of future school leaders as community development leaders. Thus, the conceptual guide developed by the participants in the seminar is:

Schools-in-Community

- (a) Distributed leadership within both the school and the community
- (b) Collaboration with multiple private and public agencies to meet all needs necessary for successful learning for all students
- (c) The development of urban educators as community leaders

The conceptual guide expands existing conceptions of educational leadership to include expectations of community leadership to ensure that the needs of all students are met. A set of standards for Georgia State's program is more detailed.

With the conceptual theme in mind, participants in the program developed the following set of standards for the preparation of urban educational leaders:

1. Urban Educational Leaders facilitate the development of a shared school and community vision that reflects the needs of students as community members.
2. Urban Educational Leaders foster a collaborative school and community environment to support and enrich student achievement.
3. Urban Educational Leaders promote a positive school and community culture.
4. Urban Educational Leaders embrace the diverse cultural and social communities that embody an urban educational environment.
5. Urban Educational Leaders are knowledgeable leaders of culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy within diverse, transient student populations.
6. Urban Educational Leaders support an atmosphere of on-going professional learning for all educators to effectively meet the learning needs of all students.
7. Urban Educational Leaders utilize a variety of school and community resources to evaluate, identify, and implement improved teaching and learning strategies.

These standards are intended to add to and not replace existing national standards for educational leadership (NCATE) and the preparation of educational leaders (ELCC). The unique element of this list of standards is on the emphases on community leadership.

DISCUSSION

The results presented in this article from the practitioner research project are somewhat limited. Much more research, analysis and interpretation are required to develop a program that effectively prepares school leaders to meet the needs of urban schools. The results of this study, however, support the ability of practitioner research

to inform program development, and improve program quality in university-based leadership preparation programs. For the program faculty, the most valuable result from this study lies in the depth and richness of the participants' contributions. Through the active involvement of practitioners of urban educational leadership, insight and perspectives previously unavailable to faculty members was revealed. This is consistent with Applebee's (1994) "knowledge-in-action." Clearly, the results of this study realized the goals of practitioner research and support the use of practitioner research to inform programmatic development. This practitioner research study provides understanding and meaning to the issue of urban leadership that will facilitate the relevance, meaning, and effectiveness of a program preparing urban educational leaders. In addition, the pedagogical process and the practitioner research conducted through the seminar, provides a model that will be used to guide ongoing programmatic improvements in the future.

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Creating Connectivity: An Urban Collaboratory for Preparation and Practice in Educational Leadership

Phyllis Durden

*For children served by urban districts,
a deprivation in learning is life threatening.
(Jackson, 2005, p. 197)*

There is compelling evidence that leadership is an important factor in effecting student learning. Common collective wisdom among the school community (students, parents, teachers, and community members) links the success of the school directly to the effectiveness of the school leader. This common wisdom is supported by research in education during the last 20 plus years that has underscored leadership as a critical factor in school improvement. Beginning with the effective school studies, Purkey & Smith (1983), in research on comprehensive school improvement, leadership is cited as an explicatory variable in schools where all students meet ambitious achievement targets (Murphy, 2005 Copland, 2003; Smylie, Wenzel, & Fendt, 2003; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The leadership impact is even greater in schools that are in more difficult circumstances and the learning needs of students are most acute (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Yet, these are the schools that tend to have higher turnover rates of principals and assistant principals, and that have the greatest challenges in recruiting candidates to fill those positions. This is current situation in New York City.

During this same time, beginning in the mid-1980s, the efficacy of school administration preparation programs has been the topic on many articles and reports. The profession itself began to site the need for change in leadership preparation programs. In 1988, the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) initiated the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEE) that did the seminal work leading to several major reform initiatives. The NCEE report, *Leaders for America's Schools* was the impetus for reforming and strengthening the profession.

Down through the years since, a number of reports and manifestos from various sources have continued to criticize and question the effectiveness of educational leadership programs. Two of the most recent reports, *Better Leaders For America's Schools: A Manifesto* (2004) and *Educating school leaders* (2005), challenge professors to re-think and redesign their programs to better prepare future school leaders. Teitel (2006) states "The two biggest criticisms of university curricula in educational administration are the lack of coherence and the lack of relevance." In support of innovation in educational leadership programs, Murphy (2006) challenges:

Now is the time for Ed Schools to experiment with bold new approaches, drawing on research and practical wisdom. Now is the time to challenge the stifling insularity that marks this field and to think in novel ways about leadership education. Now is the time to capitalize on this moment of discontent. (p. 536)

Educational leadership programs across the country have been re-thinking their programs to prepare school leaders for tomorrow's schools. The City College of New York's (CCNY) educational leadership faculty is among those involved in re-thinking and re-designing its programs. This article describes the process of co-con-

struction and the initial implementation of one emergent program, the Entry-Level Leader Certification (ELLC) Program.

THE CHALLENGES

Societal changes emanate in changes in educational expectations. The current societal tension resulting from economic, social, and demographic, and political changes most directly impact the tenor of urban education systems, sites of the most ethnically diverse, high poverty student populations. Urban education challenges, exacerbated by complex and dysfunctional bureaucracies, lack of human and material resources, and diversity in the student population, have led to urban schools and educators being blamed for low student achievement, thus not meeting educational expectations. According to Snipes, Doolittle, and Herlihy (2002), there are 16,850 public school districts in the US, 100 of which served 23% of all students. Thus, in a general sense, these changes have led to the urban school environment exuding stress, anxiety, confusion, and, in some cases, hopelessness.

New York City (NYC) is a microcosm of democracy, complexity, and diversity: over eight million people live within an area of 321 square miles in relative peace and safety. According to *The Newest New Yorkers* (2000), immigrants and their U.S.-born offspring account for approximately 55% of the city's population. NYC's foreign-born population has extremely diverse origins. Latin America was the largest area of origin in 2000, accounting for nearly 32% of the City's foreign-born, followed by Asia (24%), the nonhispanic Caribbean (21%), Europe (19%), and Africa (3%). Recent entrants comprised 49% of foreign-born Asians, 44% of Latin Americans, and 32% of nonhispanic Caribbean immigrants.

Immigration has an indirect effect on the city's population growth by way of immigrant fertility, with foreign-born mothers accounting for over one-half of all births in the city. Differences in the socioeconomic attainment of immigrant groups are partly due to the disparate set of skills they bring to the U.S., and because some groups are overwhelmingly comprised of recent entrants, who have not had time to adjust to the U.S. labor market.

NYC schools are forced to deal with issues related to race and class—assimilating immigrants, teaching students whose first language is not standard English, the effects of poverty—and according to Cuban (2001) “racial isolation, ethnic conflict, and economic disparities as they affect academic achievement both in the schools and in the city itself” (p. 5).

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDE), currently operating 1,330 schools and programs that serve 1,030,845 students, is experiencing the three challenges: (1) leadership crisis, (2) demoralized school climates, and (3) low student achievement facing most urban systems. Simultaneously, a revolution is underway in the system. Chancellor Joel Klein (2004) publicly stated that he “intends to smash the system” in New York City (NYC) and structure a more efficient and effective education system that will better serve the diverse student population it serves. The announcement resulted in a high current and forecasted turnover in the leadership ranks, which has opened up an unprecedented and unanticipated leadership gap in diverse, low-performing, high-need urban schools in the city. Within the next three years, the NYCDE is expecting to hire approximately 750 new school leaders due to retirements and the creation of new schools (Leadership Academy Overview, 2004). In mid-September, 2005, there were still 175 principal and assistant principal positions posted on the Department website yet to be filled.

The Chancellor's intention to reform the NYC system has fallen into what Forrester (1971) described as “several traps” that are set by the character of complex social systems. An attempt to relieve one set of symptoms has created a new mode of system behavior that has unpleasant consequences. Reform attempts to produce short-term improvements (i.e., an increase in student test scores) have led to demoralization. Burnout, turnover, and overload have drained the energy at all levels within the system. The feeling of powerlessness has contributed to demoralized climates in NYC schools. Fear and apprehension abound throughout the system. Strong teachers and teacher leaders are experiencing stress, anxiety, and confusion.

Exacerbating the leadership and school morale crisis, student performance in the New York City schools is among the worst in the nation. According to NYCDE Reports, the June 2004 combined State and City English Language Arts (ELA) test results indicated that 59.9% of all students in 3rd grades–8th grade DID NOT meet standards. Disaggregating the ELA scores reveals alarming statistics: 33.8% of the Asian students and 35.2% of

the white students DID NOT meet standards, but even more astounding 67.5% of the black students and 66.9% of the Hispanic students DID NOT meet standards. A report on combined city and state math assessments in 2004 indicated that 53.3% of all students in grades 3–8 DID NOT meet standards. However, the disaggregated data indicates that 63.6% of the black students and 60.5% of the Hispanic students DID NOT meet standards. When broken down into specific school statistics, the data is even more alarming. The higher the diversity and high poverty rates of the school, the lower the student achievement rates.

THE ENTRY-LEVEL LEADER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

As the Educational Leadership faculty began to rethink our programs, a common agenda emerged. We wanted to 1) incorporate more collaboration and communication with school and district leaders from the catchments area served by CCNY, and 2) use the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's Standards for School Leaders, the New York State Department of Education's Essential Knowledge and Skills for Effective School Leadership, and the CCNY School of Education's Conceptual Foundations Themes as our curriculum framework.

The on-campus certification-only model examined in this article, the Entry-Level Leader Certification Program, is a fast-track 21 semester credit hour initial School Building Leader certification only cohort program co-constructed by professors and practitioners. Targeted on entry-level leader positions, ELLC is an emergent model for systemic developmental leadership preparation that applies a systems thinking approach combined with elements of sustainability. *The leadership crisis, low student achievement and demoralized school climates in NYC schools are currently being treated as disparate issues and the lack of a connection among them leads to the impossibility of the system successfully meeting those challenges.* A systemic and sustainable approach to improving the leadership of the teaching and learning environment, and thus increasing student achievement, as this model does, is critical in urban education.

The Framework

The amalgamation and integrated insights of the educational philosophies (Dewey, 1916; Goodlad, Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004), systems and learning organizations (Forrester, 1971; Senge, 2000; Hoy, Tartar, & Kootkamp, 1991), leadership development and renewal (Burns, 1978; Heifetz, 1990) Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Elmore, 2005), complexity (Kaput, 2004; Waldrop, 1992), and change/sustainability/renewal (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves, 2005), social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave, 1988; Graves, 2005), and social justice (Michelli & Keiser, 2004; Brown, 2004; Mitchell & Poston, 1992; Marshall & Olivia, 2006) form ELLC's theoretical foundation.

Program standards from various levels and perspectives also provide a section of the ELLC program framework. The standards shaping the ELLC program are:

Standards for School Leaders

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
2. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
3. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
4. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and

6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (ISLLC, 1996)

New York State's Essential Knowledge and Skills for Effective School Leadership

Leaders know and understand what it means and what it takes to be a leader

Leaders have a vision for schools that they constantly share and promote

Leaders communicate clearly and effectively

Leaders collaborate and cooperate with others

Leaders persevere and take the “long view”

Leaders support, develop and nurture staff

Leaders hold themselves and others responsible and accountable

Leaders never stop learning and honing their skills

Leaders have the courage to take informed risks

School of Education Conceptual Foundations Themes

- A. Educating For and About Diversity
- B. Developing In-depth Knowledge About the World
- C. Becoming Skillful, Reflective Practitioners
- D. Nurturing Leadership for Learning
- E. Building Caring Communities

Educational Leadership Philosophy and Mission

CCNY's Educational Leadership Programs believe that leadership is the key to education systems (schools, districts, and regions) successfully meeting the challenges of continuous organic renewal and improvement. Leading continuously renewing schools located in diverse, low socio-economic and high need urban communities requires an understanding of the role of education in a democracy and in the context of the school community. Educational leaders have a moral and ethical responsibility to build capacity and develop leadership at all levels through collaboration and teamwork. Ultimately, those developmental leaders with the wherewithal to thrive in a dynamic complex education system will make a difference in the academic achievement of students and will mark the future of public education and academe in NYC. The primary mission of CCNY's Educational Leadership Programs is to prepare candidates who are:

Moral stewards for educational equality and excellence;

Change agents who are models and supervisors of best practice; and

Armed with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to exercise transformative and effective leadership in complex, diverse, high need educational environments.

The Design Partners

Combining knowledge and best practices from business and education, ELLC involved the entire education community in the process of designing the program—the school system, universities, community leaders, and business leaders. A dialogue began between a CCNY educational leadership faculty member, NYC district and school leaders, and two educational training groups in January 2004. Each voice had a different perspective about leadership preparation needs, both academic and practical.

The partners' dialogue generated *Thoughts on Entry-Level Leader Preparation & Training* delineating specific practitioner knowledge and skills needed by new leaders in the NYC schools (See Appendix 1). The *Thoughts* document was introduced to a larger group of school leaders (i.e., principals, assistant principals, regional administrators) for feedback and suggestions during the 2004 fall semester.

CO-CONSTRUCTION

Co-construction is very hard work. The practitioner partners emphasized the need for application of theory as an action part of the ELLC Program. The practitioner partners strongly recommended that an apprenticeship under a mentor principal or assistant principal be integrated with the courses throughout the program, reflecting John Dewey's (1916) premise "An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance" (p. 144) and that one doesn't learn in a meaningful way if the experimental "face" of a subject area—including its ambiguities and permutations—isn't encountered during the learning process. The candidates, they argued, needed to understand through experience that the challenges encountered in low-performing urban education systems require solutions that are efficient, sophisticated, powerful and amenable to action: in other words, both theoretical and practical.

The practitioner partners also requested that rather than the standard 45-hour course these newly constructed courses would: (1) organize content into customized modules; (2) require intensive work; (3) not conflict with school schedules; and (4) utilize and support use of technology. Consequently:

ELLC spans three semesters (fall, spring, and summer I), blends theory with practical applications, and incorporates an integrated apprenticeship throughout the Program.

ELLC cohort will meet bi-weekly either on-campus from 5 pm–9:30 pm on specified days or utilize Blackboard for internet modules;

ELLC candidates will attend eight (8) sessions scheduled September through June for reflective seminars on their internship experiences;

ELLC activities are sequenced to coincide with the public school calendar;

Working under the guidance of a carefully selected mentor principal(s), the candidates' performance assessment activities are based on actual work in the internship site; and

Each class session is team-taught by a professor and a practitioner and each course is a hybrid (combining on-site, on-line, and on-campus sessions).

Recognizing the power of experiential learning combined with honest external feedback and reflective personal consideration, the ELLC Program begins with an assessment of candidate knowledge, dispositions, and skills using the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The ensuing ELLC Program was customized to hone in on candidates' identified knowledge and skill gaps and enhance those currently held.

The Curriculum

Thus, grounded in Dewey's concept of experiential learning, the ELLC curriculum is deliberately designed around job-embedded problems of practice experienced in NYC schools. The ELLC curriculum requires a cohort of candidates to participate in a series of "challenge cycles" calculated to foster deep understanding of working with complex problems confronting urban schools. Candidates encounter what Heifetz (2003) identifies as two types of challenges: 1) technical challenges that can be addressed through current knowledge or know-how and 2) adaptive challenges for which solutions lie outside the current way of operating.

During the first two courses in the program, candidates are grouped into teams. Each team is required to develop a Charter School Proposal (CSP) or revise a school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). Throughout the remainder of the program, each performance assessment project (see the ELLC Program Chart for performance assessment projects linked to each course in the Program) is related to and developed for the team's school. Candidates analyze complex "on the ground" challenges through multiple lenses (i.e., purpose, people, practice, and place) in order to address the multiple, interrelated factors impacting specific issues. Distinguishing between technical and adaptive challenges is a critical for system leaders to identify and implement a practical and effective solution. ELLC, through simulations and problem solving on the ground, prepares candidates to become system thinkers in action who, learn to size up situations quickly and intuitively, and maximize positive outcomes because of their immersion and system perspectives, (Fullan, 2005).

Each of the seven courses in the ELLC Program has been broken down into modules that can be integrated around a problem of practice. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the courses, modules, activities, performance assessments and standards linkage of each course.

RESEARCH

The purpose of this preliminary research is to investigate the potential of the ELLC Program to address the three major challenges in urban schools cited earlier in the article: the “good” leader crisis, low student achievement and demoralized school climates.

Methodology

This research, in the preliminary stage, is a descriptive pre-exploratory case study that examines the data from four disparate sources to provide insight into the preparatory function and potential impact of one school leadership program on urban school challenges. In this preliminary stage, data drawn from the following sources is examined: 1) candidate and school demographics, 2) the initial candidate performance on the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), and 3) the candidates’ school climates measured by the Organizational Climate Index (OCI); and 4) candidate responses to mid-program survey. An exploratory case study will be completed at the end of the pilot program (June, 2006) to identify questions, select measurement constructs, and to develop measures.

Preliminary Demographic Data

Candidates

Sixteen candidates, nominated by their principals, were admitted into the ELLC 2005–2006 cohort. One candidate dropped because of family health problems at the end of the first semester. Currently, fifteen candidates are participating: 10 females and 5 males. This ELLC cohort reflects the diversity found in NYC. Thirteen of the 15 candidates (85.6%) are minorities. Eight candidates are currently teachers, two are deans, one is a bilingual program coordinator, two are academic intervention services coordinators, one is a content coach, and one is a business manager.

Schools

Five candidates serve in traditional elementary schools and two in progressive elementary schools. Four candidates serve in newly formed small middle schools (grades 5–8) that were previously within large middle schools. Three candidates are in combined middle-high schools (grades 6–12): two in a newly formed school within a larger school and one in a charter school in its second year of operation. One candidate serves in a specialized high school (grades 9–12) in its third year of operation.

The average student population in the candidate’s schools is 96.9% minority. The average socio-economic barometer (free and reduced lunch count) is 93.2% in these schools. The two progressive elementary schools are the exception with 55.1 and 61.8% minority student populations and 23.1 and 38.8% free and reduced lunch count, respectively.

Test scores are the sole measure of student achievement in NYC schools. Eight of the ELLC candidate’ schools are new (began operation within the last two years) and have no published data on test scores. Among the seven schools (all elementary) that have published test score data, a difference between the two progressive schools and the five traditional schools was found. An average of 50.9% of the students in Math and 63.0% of students in English Language Arts DO NOT meet standards in the five traditional elementary schools. In the two progressive schools, the average in Math is 30.9% and in English Language Arts is 29.1% that DO NOT meet standards. Supporting many research studies indicated this finding, the schools with the highest %age of minority and high need students have the lowest test scores.

Leadership Practices Inventory

Rooted in extensive research to determine the leadership competencies that are essential to getting extraordinary things done in organizations, Kouzes and Posner (2003) posit that there are five practices of exemplary

leadership. The model of leadership that emanated from this work has spawned articles, books, and a psychometric inventory that measures those five practices. Exemplary leadership, as identified by Kouzes and Posner, is performance-based and emanates from these five leadership practices:

Model the Way—Establish principles, create standards of excellence, set an example for others to follow; set interim goals so that people can achieve small wins, and create opportunities for victory.

Inspire a Shared Vision—Believe, envision the future, breathe life into the vision, and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.

Challenge the Process—Search for opportunities to change the status quo, look for innovative ways to improve the organization, experiment and take risks, make mistakes, and use them as learning opportunities.

Enable Others to Act—Foster collaboration and build spirited teams, actively involve others, create an atmosphere of respect, trust and human dignity.

Encourage the Heart—Keep hope and determination alive, recognize individual contributions, share the rewards.

The *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI) was taken by the ELLC candidates to identify the leadership growth areas, and thus, customize the program activities to meet candidate needs.

After examining the LPI data, the ELLC activities were constructed to give the candidates opportunities to develop and practice: (1) clarifying their personal values; (2) aligning actions with shared values; (3) envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities; (4) enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations; (5) seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve, and; (6) experiment and take risks constantly and learn from mistakes.

In June, near conclusion of the ELLC Program, candidates will again complete the LPI, and will be asked to enlist others in their surround to complete the LPI Others for them. The data from those LPI (self and others) will be analyzed in an effort to measure candidate growth in the five practices of exemplary leadership.

Organizational Climate Index

The Organizational Climate Index (OCI), selected as an instrument to examine the climate of the candidates' schools, is a short organizational climate descriptive measure for schools (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2001). The OCI has four dimensions—principal leadership, teacher professionalism, achievement press for students to perform academically, and vulnerability to the community. Collegial Leadership is directed toward both meeting the social needs of the faculty and achieving the goals of the school. The principal treats teachers as professional colleagues, is open, egalitarian, and friendly, but at the same time sets clear teacher expectations and standards of performance. Professional Teacher Behavior is marked by respect for colleague competence, commitment to students, autonomous judgment, and mutual cooperation and support. Achievement Press describes a school that set high but achievable academic standards and goals. Students persist, strive to achieve, and are respected by each other and teachers for their academic success. Parents, teachers, and the principal all exert pressure for high standards and school improvement. Institutional Vulnerability is the extent to which the school is susceptible to a few vocal parents and citizen groups. High vulnerability suggests that both teachers and principals are unprotected and put on the defensive.

Some principals were unwilling to allow the candidates to conduct the Organizational Climate Index (OCI) in the candidates' schools without the NYC Department of Education's Office of Research approval. The director of that office was contacted, the directions for approval were followed, but the approval never came. Thus, data from this variable of the intended preliminary research is not available.

Survey Responses

An Entry-Level Leader Certification Mid-Program Candidate Survey comprised of 7 open-ended questions was developed to elicit initial feedback from candidates at the halfway point in the program. The survey was designed to assess the candidate's perspective of the ELLC design, content, activities, and delivery. ELLC candi-

dates received and responded to the survey via efile. Those seven questions and the candidate responses are presented below.

1. *Describe some of the activities, readings, or discussions that were beneficial to you in developing your leadership skills and readiness to assume a leadership position in an urban school.*

The candidate responses indicated that the biggest benefit was the challenge to look deeply into themselves and change ‘habits of mind.’ Comments such as “This job is not for the weak,” “readings opened my eyes to the fact that principals have a moral duty to play,” “taught me how to deal with group dynamics”, “challenged my own thinking about the role of the leader”, “guest presenters have been subject matter experts who were able to share their knowledge effectively. This is a great way to learn.” All depict aspiring leaders thinking about the challenges of the role.

2. *Describe some activities that enabled you to apply what you learned to practical urban school situations?*

Writing their own school visions, revising a mock Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), role-playing, preparing and presenting power-point presentations indicated that the hands-on approach to learning proved to be beneficial to the candidates. “Now I have the confidence to give my own professional development sessions with a kind of swagger,” “making changes to the CEP prepared me to assist in writing my present school’s CEP,” Role-playing enhanced my thinking skills” are samples of the candidate responses.

3. *How have you benefited from being a member of a cohort in the ELLC?*

Candidate responses “With other people in the class constructively sharing their work and life experiences, I have learned 20 year’s worth of practical, applicable information in one year . . . thoughtful people, reflective practitioners who work VERY hard . . . earned my respect”, “a diverse group of leaders . . . has given me the opportunity to feed off their knowledge and experiences”, “we are all in it together . . . working toward a common goal . . . strive together and enjoy each others company” evoke an image of the type of collegiality that will serve as a model for these aspiring leaders in their future roles.

4. *In what ways has the ELLC Program helped you, specifically, to understand the role of an urban school leader to promote the success of all students?*

“The program, its activities and the things I have learned have confirmed my personal values that all children can learn, that all deserve equal opportunities, and that my educational philosophy (work hard, help each other, have fun) can be very effective in helping all students learn”, has provided me with all the ingredients necessary for a school leader . . . spelled out in a way that I know”, “understand that it is OK to ask for help”, “that it all begins and ends with the principal” are candidate responses that indicate candidates are beginning to grasp the nuances of the role.

5. *How do you use the content, discussions, and activities of the ELLC to reflect upon your visions, philosophy, and role as an educational leader in an urban school?*

The ELLC content, discussions, and activities are used in multiple ways in the candidate’s current work. Candidate responses reflect their value. “After each class I reflect on what was discussed and on the activities we did”, “I find our class discussions and activities highly relevant as I continue to learn”, “you see what is right and what is wrong with the current system”, When working on my current school’s CEP . . . all I had to do was recollect the process I had gone through . . . for class” depict the candidates’ use of what they learn.

6. *Which ELLC activities have most enhanced your problem-solving and decision-making abilities?*

Several activities were referenced in the candidate responses. Role-playing, working in teams, real-life

stories, and experiencing the stages of group development appear to be the most beneficial to enhancing candidate abilities in problem solving and decision-making. Responses included “working in groups on several projects has taught me how to deal with different personalities”, “activities allowed me to see that in order for teachers to grow, I, as the instructional leader, will have to model . . . support and nurture their every move”.

7. *Please provide recommendations for activities, topics, or discussions that you wish would have been addressed in this class?*

The Education Law course, offered during the Winter Intercession, does not provide sufficient time to learn and understand the critical impact of laws, policies, and regulations. It needs to be offered during a regular semester to more fully meet the candidates’ needs. Responses such as “the Intercession was too short and future administrators need a strong background on school law”, “I continue to read in this area to increase my familiarity with the changing evolving rules and decisions”, and “I recommend that the Education Law course be longer” clearly suggest the shortcomings of the current delivery of the Education Law course.

PRELIMINARY IMPLICATIONS

The ELLC candidates are committed and dedicated to the diverse, high need, and most low achieving urban schools they serve. Most of the candidates are products of the same types of schools they serve and desire to become a school leader to improve and renew those or similar urban schools. As one candidate stated, “Many of us may be placed in dysfunctional building with unhappy personnel”.

The data discussed above indicates that the ELLC Program is moving the right direction, but needs some revisions to better meet candidate’s needs. This cursory analysis on limited data helps guide the next step in the planned research: the exploratory case study. An extensive empirical research study looking at the results of the ELLC Program in terms of its impact on leader quality, school climates, and student achievement in the future. This preliminary research will help inform that work.

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APPENDIX 1

Thoughts on Entry-Level Leader Preparation & Training AP's need knowledge, dispositions, and skills in:

Problem Solving

- How to discern the “real” problem in a given situation
- How to look for and find win-win solutions for problem situations
- When to “cut your loses” and make a decision
- How to “manage” the elements of organizational change
- How and when to use change and conflict management strategies

Communication

- Using words and phrases that support and give ownership to the other person (Example: When supervising teachers, “what could you say/do that would help the student understand?”)
- How to “talk” with the different audiences (teachers, aides, custodians, various community members/groups, principals, central office, etc.) about educational issues that are meaningful to them and in terms they can relate to
- How to listen and negotiate
- How to “honor” diverse and differing opinions

Facilities/HR Regulations and Responsibilities

- NYS and NYC fire drill requirements and best times/ways to execute them
- Legal challenges and judicial review process relating to safety and security issues in schools
- Rules/policies relevant to licensing, fingerprinting, and accreditation of teachers and other building personnel
- Work rules in UFT and CSA contracts
- Regulations, incentives, and benefit plans for new teachers and the related processes
- Importance of clean, well-maintained facilities

Community Building

- How to identify the power bases in the school community
- How to diagnose the climate/culture of the school community
- How to provide inclusiveness for school constituencies
- How to discern the community issues that are impacting the school and the history of those issues
- How to involve families in school improvement efforts
- How the genesis of political influences at the federal, state, and City level affect local education delivery
- How school issues and policies can have significant economic consequences at various governmental, region/district, and building levels (Example: early retention)
- How to attract and develop high quality educational professionals

Data Based Decision Making

- Use of basic software applications
- How to collect and manage data
- How to interpret school/grade/classroom reports from NYCDOE, NYS etc. to define education priorities and needs

How to analyze data to detect causal relations and propose solutions (i.e., attendance, suspensions, test scores, etc.)

Entrepreneurship

How to “market” the school for grants, etc.

How to present selected data graphically and publicly in beneficial ways

How to identify potential resources

Instructional Leadership

How to observe a classroom environment and discern the level of teaching and learning that’s taking place there

How to determine the most effective type of instructional support to provide for a low-performing teacher

How to provide opportunities for observing “best practices” in teaching that would be most helpful

How to gauge the potential professional growth and capacity of a teacher

Curriculum Leadership

How to analyze and discern the value of a curriculum

Knowing and understanding the principles and goals of the school curriculum

Importance of knowing the time frame and student expectations of the school curriculum (where the students should be at any given point in time)

How to build teacher capacity in understanding and implementing the school curriculum

APPENDIX 2

Table 1. Entry-Level Leader Certification Program Synopsis.

Course	Modules	Activities	Assessment Projects	Standards
Fall Semester	Moral Dimensions of Leadership	Educ Phil & Soc Foundations	Reflective Journal	ELCC 5.1, 2, & 3: ES 1, 3, 6: CF C, D
		Moral Stewardship	Leadership Training Workshop	ELCC 5.3, 6.1: ES 1, 3, 7: CF D
		Communication & Dec Making	Conflict Mgmt Case Study	ELCC 1.1: ES 1, 8: CF B
		Conflict Mgmt	Leadership Platform	
	Dynamics of Educational Organizations	Systems	Reflective Journal	ELCC 2.1, 5.2: ES 5, 7: CF E
		School Climate	School Climate Analysis	ELCC 1.1, 6.1: ES 2: CF B, D, E
		Change Processes	School Vision	ELCC 1.3, 1.4: ES 1, 2, 3, 7: CF E
		Strategic Planning	CEP or Charter School Plan	ELLC 1.2, 1.5: ES 2, 3
	School Leader Internship & Seminar	Group Processes	Vision & Plan Presentation	
		Application of Theories & Concepts	Substantial & Sustained Standards-based	ELCC 7.1, 7.2: ES 1, 5: CF A-E
Winter Intercession	Education Law	Reflection on Application	Applied in field	ELCC 7.3
		Feedback on Application	Planned/Guided	ELCC 7.4
		Structure	Graduate Credit	ELCC 7.5
		Personnel		ELCC 7.6
	Education Law	Case Study	Reflective Journal	ELCC 6.1: ES 5: CF A
		Moot Court	Policy Analysis	ELCC 6.3: ES 4, 9: CF D
		Guest Speakers	Policy Proposal	ELCC 6.2: ES 7, 9: CF D
		New Teacher Contract	Staff Performance Plan	
	Student Rights	Special Student Regs.		

Table 1 (continued). Entry-Level Leader Certification Program Synopsis.

	Course	Modules	Activities	Assessment Projects	Standards
Spring Semester	Instructional Leadership	Student Learning & Dev	Learning Walk	Reflective Journal	ELCC 2.2: ES 3, 7: CF B, D
		Instructional Supervision	Mock Data Analysis Guest Speakers ELL Regulations & Models	Teacher Observation Motivation Action Research School Action Plan	ELCC 2.3: ES 7, 9: CF B, C ELCC 2.4: ES 7, 8: CF D
1st Summer Semester	School Management	Professional Development	AIS Regulations & Models		
		Curriculum Development	Professional Development		
		Data Analysis & Use			
		School Operations			
1st Summer Semester	Internship & Seminar (Con't)	Information Systems		Reflective Journal	ELCC 3.1: 3, 7: CFE
		Budgeting & Finance		School Budget Plan	ELCC 3.3: ES 4, 8: CF B
		Human Resources		Recruitment & Retention Plan	ELCC 3.2: ES 5, 7: CF D
		Special Programs		School Action Plan	
1st Summer Semester	School Community Building	Diversity Appreciation		Reflective Journal	ELCC 4.1: ES 2, 5: CF A
		Adult Learning		Key Constituency Chart	ELCC 1.5, 3.3, 4.1: ES 3, 4, 7: CFE
		School/Community Partners		School Partnership Plan	ELCC 4.3, 6.2: ES 1, 2, 3, 4: CF D, E
		Entrepreneurship		Partnership Workshop	
1st Summer Semester	Internship & Seminar (Con't)				

Assessing and Selecting Future School Leaders

James O. McDowelle, William A. Rouse and Harold Holloman

INTRODUCTION

Jim Collins is the author of *Good to Great* and one of the few popular authors on leadership to base his conclusions on empirical evidence and rigorous research methods.

Collins observed that one of the most surprising findings of his research has been that the most important leadership decisions are not about *what* but about *who* (Useem, 2005). He noted that after reviewing the research and studying interview manuscripts of his work it seems evident that decisions about people or *people decisions* are the most important decisions made by leaders. Collins provided the following rationale for the importance of *people decision* (Useem, 2005):

Fundamentally, the world is uncertain. Decisions are about the future and your place in the future when that future is uncertain. So what is the right thing you can do to prepare for that uncertainty? You can have the right people with you. (p.90)

The faculty of a southern regional university agreed with Collins' perspective on the importance of people in the exercise of effective leadership. Consequently, after extensive analysis and discussion they decided that one of the major efforts at improvement of the Masters of Science Program in Educational Leadership should focus on obtaining the best possible candidates for study in the program and then tailoring the program to those candidates' strengths and areas in need of improvement.

For more than two decades those concerned with the quality of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs (ELPP) have identified problems in the recruitment and selection of superior candidates for ELPP (Achilles, 1984; Carr, 2005; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 1993). Most of those concerned about the quality of candidates for admission to graduate ELPP have focused on the lack of selectivity in the admission process. These critics contend that almost everyone who applies to ELPP is eventually admitted (McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 1993). An analysis of the problem of nonselective admission to ELPP shows that once one looks beneath the surface problem of a lack of selectivity, the root of the problem can be traced to difficulty in identifying with precision the characteristics and qualities required to exercise effective leadership. In turn, the difficulties in identifying the characteristics of effective leaders can be attributed to difficulties in defining leadership itself.

Defining Leadership

The problem of defining leadership is well established in the literature (Bass, 1990; Collins, 2002; Nahavandi, 2003; Northhouse, 2004; Stogdill, 1974). Stogdill said that "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it" (p.7). Collins contends that vague, expansive definitions of leadership create problems when analyzing organizational issues.

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When we define leadership by ascribing unlimited and undifferentiated functions and activities in an organization to leadership, according to Collins, we have really not defined leadership at all. We have simply thrown up our hands in frustration and “we prevent ourselves from gaining deeper, more scientific understanding about what makes companies tick” (p.22).

Although acknowledging the difficulty of providing a precise definition of leadership, Nahavandi (2003) and Northouse (2004), after conducting comprehensive reviews of the leadership literature, have found elements common to the phenomena of leadership no matter where or how leadership is exercised. Both Nahavandi and Northouse list three common elements. Those three elements are as follows:

- (a) Leadership involves interaction with a group;
- (b) Leadership involves the exercise of influence; and
- (c) Leadership involves the attainment of a goal.

An examination of these three essential elements indicates that these elements (a) group interaction (b) exercise of influence and (c) goal attainment in a specific context are always present when leadership takes place. The question posed for those concerned with selecting future leaders for the schools is the following: Do traditional criteria used to determine admission to ELPP assess these three essential elements of leadership? The faculty in this particular university decided that traditional admission criteria do not assess these essential elements of leadership. Therefore in order to obtain the best possible candidates for ELPP, the faculty concluded that non-traditional admission procedures as well as traditional criteria needed to be employed. In this case, the use of developmental assessments constituted the nontraditional procedure selected.

Traditional Criteria for Assessing Candidates for Admission to ELPP

Typically ELPP use multiple criteria in assessing whether candidates should be admitted for graduate study. Among the criteria employed for admission decisions are: (a) Standardized tests, specifically the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Miller’s Analogy Test (MAT), (b) Writing samples, (c) Previous teaching experience, (d) Grade Point Average (GPA), (e) Recommendations; and (f) Personal Interviews. Hackman and Price (1995) in a study of ELPP graduate programs reported that 53% used the GRE as an admission criterion, while 33% used the MAT. Fifty-two percent required candidates to have previous teaching experience. Three of the criteria listed above can assist in assessing academic ability (GRE, MAT, and GPA). Recommendations and previous teaching experience can be used to assess work history. Personal interviews can be used to assess poise and verbal ability. The writing sample can be used to assess writing ability. However, none of these criteria directly assess the three common elements listed by Nahavandi and Northouse as essential to leadership (group interaction, exercise of influence and goal attainment in context).

Utilizing the Three Essential Elements of Leadership

The faculty decided that it is important to include the three essential elements of leadership cited by Nahavandi and Northouse with traditional admission criteria currently employed in ELPP when evaluating candidates for admission to graduate school leadership programs. To address the inclusion of these leadership elements with traditional criteria for admission it was necessary to draw from current leadership theory and practice conceptual bases. The conceptual base drawn from practice was in the realm of *interpersonal skills*. The conceptual base drawn from leadership theory was *contextual leadership theory*. It was believed that the knowledge base from the practice of interpersonal skills would successfully address the issues of group interaction and exercise of influence. Utilization of the knowledge base from contextual leadership theory would be used to address the issue of goal attainment in schools.

Interpersonal Skills

A renewed and burgeoning interest in interpersonal skills is evident in even a cursory review of current lead-

ership literature (Fernandez-Araoz, 2001; Fleenor, 2003; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Hernez-Broom & Hughes, 2004; McCauley, 2004; McDowelle & Buckner, 2002; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs & Fleishman, 2000; Nahavandi, 2003; Northhouse, 2004; Sousa, 2003; Wong & Law, 2003; Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). A growing number of leadership theorists and researchers are asserting the importance of interpersonal skills such as communication, motivation, persuasion, conflict resolution and team-building in the exercise of leadership. Interpersonal skills are also called people skills, social skills, or in certain contexts, soft skills. Whatever the terminology, these skills are defined by the ability to interact effectively with followers or constituents and to influence followers and constituents toward the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Much of the focus on interpersonal and people skills has been generated by leadership literature that scrutinizes the causes for leadership failure. Many of those studies have cited a lack of interpersonal or people skills as the primary reason for ineffective leadership (Leslie & Van Elson, 1996; McCauley, 2004; Nahavandi, 2003; Nelton, 1997). "Lack of people skills and the inability to manage relationships are central issues [in leadership failure]. Leaders who are good with followers and other constituencies have a better chance of success" (Nahavandi, 2003, p. 79). Emerging research in cognitive neuroscience and human behavior is allowing both practitioners and researchers to apply interpersonal skills with greater precision and effectiveness. (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Wong & Law, 2003). Some of this research involves the role of the emotions in decision-making and leadership and can be subsumed under the heading of emotional intelligence. Since much of the research on the emotions is based on brain imaging studies and other neurological inquiries it provides the area of interpersonal skills with scientific authority lacking when interpersonal skills were in vogue in the 1960's and 70's.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

The need for interpersonal skills in the arena of school leadership has become prominent as the realization grows that school leadership takes place in an extremely people intensive environment (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; McDowelle & Buckner, 2002). In fact Goldring and Greenfield (2002) contend that schools are one of the most intensive people environments in which leadership can be exercised. Aside from the field of Medicine, no other venue for leadership involves more interaction with fellow human beings. School leaders work with and through people (e.g., teachers, aides, counselors, and other administrators) with raw materials composed of people (students) and a final product consisting of people (graduating students). In addition, school leaders work closely with important constituents such as parents and government officials. This people intensive environment demands the application of highly effective people skills.

Developing Interpersonal Skills

Business and industry have begun to stress the importance of interpersonal skills and are making a major investment in interpersonal skills development (Goleman, 1998; Nahavandi, 2003; Spenser, McClelland, & Kleiner, 1997; Sweeney, 1999). For example, General Electric Company spends approximately one billion dollars a year developing the social and emotional competencies that comprise interpersonal skills. L'Oreal has conducted research that indicates personnel with well-developed emotional competencies and interpersonal skills are more successful than those with less well developed emotional and interpersonal skills. As a result of this research, L'Oreal has also devoted considerable resources to interpersonal competency development. American Express and the United States Air Force have also made a major investment in emotional competency and interpersonal skills training.

At least one state has recognized the necessity of interpersonal skills for school leaders. In Maine, the state's teacher and administrator associations, business leaders, and university systems collaborated to create an innovative leadership program for teacher leaders and principals. The program is called the Maine School Leadership Network (MSLN) and envisions three central dimensions of leadership knowledge as represented in the Leadership Development Plan Portfolio. The three dimensions are (a) cognitive aspects of leadership in schools (b) interpersonal skills, and (c) intrapersonal skills. Early reports on the MSLN have been positive (Donaldson,

Bowe, MacKenzie & Marnik, 2004). After reviewing this and other research on interpersonal skills the faculty were satisfied that the inclusion of an interpersonal skills component would satisfy two of the essential elements of leadership cited by Nahavandi (2003) and Northhouse (2004), namely (a) group interaction and (b) exercise of influence.

Contextual Leadership Theory

Contextual leadership theory is premised upon the fact that leadership researchers recognize that leadership is embedded within the environment and structure of the organization in which leadership is exercised (Hunt, 2004). This approach to the study of leadership is suggested by the growing body of literature that speaks to the importance of understanding context when exercising effective leadership (Day, 2001; Gronn, 2003; Harvard Leadership Initiative, 2004; Hernez-Broom & Hughes, 2004). For example, researchers in the Harvard Business School are engaged in developing a data-base comprised of the leading business leaders of the 20th century. One of the findings generated by the study of the information in this data-base is the importance of what these researchers call *contextual intelligence*. Contextual intelligence is the ability to make sense of the contextual framework in which leaders must work. The researchers say this ability often made the difference between success and failure for the top 20th century business leaders (Harvard Leadership Initiative, 2004). Providing opportunities for candidates to demonstrate leadership behaviors in the specific context in which leadership will be exercised will satisfy the obtaining of goals in context component of the essential elements of leadership.

The Assessment

The assessment used has been tentatively titled the Masters of School Administration Assessment Report (MSAAR). This assessment was selected because it is able to measure with some degree of precision the three essential elements of leadership discussed earlier in the paper. The MSAAR accomplishes this appraisal of leadership qualities through an evaluation of behaviors categorized under the headings of (a) Setting Instructional Direction (b) Teamwork (c) Sensitivity (d) Judgment (e) Results Orientation (f) Organizational Ability (g) Communication Skills and (h) Developing Self and Others. The evaluations included in the MSAAR include an evaluation of a wide array of interpersonal skills and the evaluation is conducted in the context of a simulation of the organization in which students will exercise their leadership skills. Among the activities in which applicants will participate are (a) a Leaderless Group (b) In-Basket Simulations (c) Communication Exercises (d) Reflection activities and (e) Rating Activities.

- (a) The Leaderless Group is a simulation exercise in which candidates are given a problem and then told to discuss tactics, strategies and solutions within the context of the leaderless group.
- (b) The In-Basket Simulation requires candidates to respond to a series of typical and atypical problems, requests and situations that might be encountered in a school day.
- (c) The Communications Exercises require the candidate to prepare communication in the school context under deadline pressure.
- (d) Reflection Activities require candidates to reflect upon each of the activities and ponder their strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- (e) Rating Activities require candidates to rate the effectiveness of their leadership behaviors. These ratings are supplemented by ratings of peers and professors.

The MSAAR was adapted from materials and concepts previously employed in the National Association of School Principals (NASSP) Developmental Assessment Center (DAC). The university received permission from the NASSP to adapt these materials for the specific needs of their graduate program. The primary changes made to the NASSP DAC were (a) Materials were modified to reflect simulation activities appropriate for teacher-leaders who have not been trained to be principals. (b) Materials were modified to reflect the geograph-

ical area served by the subject university (Buckner, 2005).

Using the Assessment

The assessments will aid in the selection of candidates and will also inform and shape the candidates' preparation program. Upon completion of the MSA Assessment Report, MSA candidates and faculty advisors will analyze the assessment results and discuss implications for the individual's program of study and opportunities for personal and professional growth. These "next step" options may include, but are not limited to: *redirecting*, *retooling*, *reforming*, and *refining*.

In the case of *redirecting*, the candidate and his or her faculty advisors may discover from the assessment process and subsequent data analysis that the candidate did not produce adequate contextual evidence for several of the skill dimensions. For example, the student may have clear and convincing inadequacies in the areas of *setting instructional direction*, *oral communication*, *teamwork*, and *sensitivity*. Upon further review of the student's previous coursework other admission criteria and faculty input, it is possible that the advisors would have sufficient contextual evidence for redirecting the student out of the MSA program at that time, and into a different area of study.

In the case of *retooling*, the candidate and his or her faculty advisors may discover during the assessment review process that the student did not present convincing contextual evidence of adequate *written communication* skills. The faculty advisors could instruct the student to participate in a formal writing workshop (i.e. university writing center) to develop the necessary writing skills needed within the context of the educational setting. The student and advisors would agree on the steps of the retooling process with the understanding that the candidate must present convincing contextual evidence that demonstrates adequate *written communication* skills before continuing in the MSA program.

In the case of *reforming*, the candidate and his or her faculty advisors may discover during the assessment review process that the student demonstrated some contextual evidence in each of the skill dimension areas. The reforming process challenges the candidate and faculty advisors to examine each of the skill dimensions closely, prioritize the skill dimensions that could lead to multidimensional improvement, and note those priorities in the candidate's program portfolio. For example, the student's limited *organizational ability* may preclude success in the *judgment* and *results orientation* skill dimensions. Therefore, the candidate would continue in the program and complete case studies related to the priority skill dimensions (ex. *organizational ability*) and compile artifacts throughout their course of study, the MSAAR and the internship experience that demonstrate clear, consistent, and convincing contextual evidence and improvement in the designated priority areas.

In the case of *refining*, the candidate and his or her faculty advisors may discover during the assessment review process that the student demonstrated clear, consistent, and convincing contextual evidence in most (or all) of the skill dimensions. However, the student and advisors would agree on a skill dimension that needed additional improvement. The need for improvement in this specific area would be noted in the candidate's program portfolio and the candidate would compile artifacts throughout their course of study, the MSAAR and the internship experience that demonstrate clear, consistent, and convincing contextual evidence and improvement in the designated area.

This targeted approach to assessing, selecting, and developing future school leaders is extremely individualized. The MSA Assessment Report incorporates the three essential elements of leadership mentioned earlier and emphasizes the significance of assessing interpersonal skills within the context of a simulated school environment. All MSA students complete the same program of study (i.e. courses, internship, etc.); however, through the MSACSA review process a candidate's personal and professional development path is proactively monitored, directed, and enhanced by the triangulation of data from various assessment sources.

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of using developmental assessment along with traditional admission criteria is to increase the amount of information available when judging the credentials of applicants for admission to ELPP. Faculty at this university believed that an assessment of interpersonal skills in conjunction with traditional admission criteria will improve the selectivity of ELPP. The lack of selectivity has been a major criticism of ELPP for sev-

eral decades. The use of developmental assessment will also aid in the tailoring of these programs to the strengths and areas of need for each individual student.

Take Away Points

1. ELPP are criticized for a lack of selectivity in the admissions process.
2. Much of this criticism can be attributed to problems in identifying qualities of effective leaders.
3. Difficulty in identifying qualities of effective leaders can be partially attributed to problems in defining leadership.
4. Nahavandi and Northhouse agree that three essential for the exercise of leadership are (a) group interaction (b) exercise of influence and (c) goal attainment in context.
5. These essential elements of leadership can be categorized under the headings of interpersonal skills and contextual leadership.
6. The MSAAR incorporates the assessment of interpersonal skills in context.
7. Data from the MSAAR will be utilized to aid in the selection of candidates and tailor the MSA program to the individual student.

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Stormy Weather: Replacing the Exodus of Principals from Urban Schools

Charles P. Mitchel and Lourdes Z. Mitchel

INTRODUCTION

Urban schools resemble category 5 hurricanes with the high winds of academic rhetoric and unfunded mandates from every level of government, the flooding of students with unrelenting socioeconomic and learning difficulties, and the collapse of the infrastructure of antiquated buildings and operational systems (National Weather Service, 2005). Navigating this stormy weather is the beleaguered urban school principal, responsible for leadership and accountability. Besides the obvious issue of the major challenges of urban public schools—poverty, racial imbalance, crime and violence, transient student population, old and often unhealthy school structures, lack of adequate funding—two significant problems relate to the need for skilled principals for urban schools: (a) inadequate principal preparation programs and (b) a shortage of quality candidates. This paper addresses both problems by describing a best practice for a university principal preparation program, Seton Hall University's Grow Your Own Emerging Leader Program (GYO).

The GYO program was designed using the findings of a comprehensive review of literature and two surveys from 662 community members. The first survey was distributed to and collected from administrators, teachers, students, and central office and support staff by GYO students; the second was sent to current school administrators. The surveys asked a variety of stakeholders about their perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and restraining forces that hinder student success. Responses were used to recalibrate the GYO curriculum to address authentic problems facing local urban school districts.

NEED

Three decades of research support effective leadership by the school principal as the key to student success (Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) stated, "If you want high-performing schools, hire principals who can lead them to success" (Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003, p. 3). What resources do urban public school districts have to find these principals?

Public school administrators are typically teachers who earn state certification as supervisors, principals, and superintendents through graduate school education at either the master's or the doctoral level. For attending graduate programs in education administration, Schneider (1998) found that graduate students select their programs based on what he called the three Cs: (a) Convenience, (b) Cost, and (c) Comfort. Consequently, program quality or content may not even be an important consideration in such a decision.

In 1998, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) asked, "Does graduate training in education administration improve America's schools" (Brent & Haller, 1998, p. 1)? No matter how it is said or interpreted, the response was a resounding no (Bjork & Ginsberg, 1995; Lashway, 2003).

Inadequate Principal Preparation Programs

Nearly 20 years ago, Hawley (1988) commented, “Most programs for training school administrators range in quality from embarrassing to disastrous” (p. 84). Similarly, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEE) reported critically that since the mid-1960s, “pre-service preparation programs for education administrators have proliferated, but their quality has deteriorated . . . [and] course content is often irrelevant, outdated and unchallenging” (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988, pp. 9–11). Even the standards for principal preparation recommended by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) have come under attack for their weakness in research, lack of a strong knowledge base, and reinforcement of the status quo (Achilles & Price, 2001).

Hess and Kelly (2005) conducted an extensive study of the content of principal preparation programs at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Their review of 200 syllabi indicated that future principals receive “limited training [at colleges and universities] in the use of data, research, technology, the hiring or termination of personnel, or using data to evaluate personnel in a systematic way” (p. 10). In addition, students do not appear to read authors in the areas of management or “sophisticated inquiry on education productivity and governance” (p. 10). They concluded that preparation programs do not contain the information most necessary for success in the role of principal in an era of accountability. Moreover, they found that principal preparation programs are quite traditional, focusing on monitoring curriculum, supporting faculty, and managing facilities. Current issues such as working with parents are ignored. Another recent bashing of principal preparation programs, although offering nothing new, reaffirmed the belief that such programs are “inadequate to appalling” (Levine, 2005, p. 23).

Principal Shortage

By the end of the next decade, as many as half of all principals can be expected to leave their jobs (Levine, 2005; Peterson & Kelley, 2001). In addition, trends indicate that educators become principals at a later age than in the past, and relatively fewer remain in their positions past the age of 55 (Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Chung, & Ross, 2003; Wallace Foundation, 2003). The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) recently reported that the number of qualified candidates to replace the departing principals is diminishing, and finding highly qualified candidates to turn schools that are performing poorly into effective, high performing schools seems somewhat impossible (Bottoms et al., 2003). Inevitably, urban districts are faced with the greatest shortages of principals, especially highly qualified ones (Portin, 2000). According to the Wallace Foundation (2003), “. . . districts and individual schools perceived as having the most challenging working conditions, large concentrations of impoverished or minority students, lower per pupil expenditures and lower salaries find it hardest to attract principal candidates” (pp. 4–5).

CONTEXT

Seton Hall University, a 150-year-old private Catholic institution operated by the Archdiocese of Newark, is located in South Orange adjacent to Newark, New Jersey’s largest city. Newark has 277,911 residents, nearly all minority—53.5% Black or African American and 29.5% Hispanic (United States Bureau of the Census, 2002). Most (86.2%) families earn less than \$50,000 per year, and 25.5% of families live below the poverty level. For families with children under 18, nearly one-third (32.6%) live below the poverty level. Almost two-thirds (65.6%) of Newark families are headed by single women (United States Bureau of the Census, 2002).

Newark Public Schools enrolled 42,031 individuals in grades Pre-K through adult and special education during the 2004–2005 school year, including 59.5% Black or African American and 31.6% Hispanic students (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006). The district has 76 schools of various grade configurations, including three ungraded schools for special education students and an evening school for adults (Newark Public Schools, 2006). GYO’s initial focus has been Newark, the largest city in New Jersey. It will be offered to all urban districts in the future.

GROW YOUR OWN EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM (GYO)

In 2003, Marion A. Bolden, superintendent in Newark, and Charles P. Mitchel, chair of Seton Hall's Department of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy, began an ongoing dialogue regarding the district's concern about student achievement and the role of school leaders in improving it. They knew that, as challenges to leadership increased, the next generation of principals would need levels of knowledge, skill, and character strength substantially greater than those who had come before. Mitchel, on behalf of the university, agreed to offer a unique specialized master's degree program, including New Jersey principal certification, to a select group of outstanding teachers. The program would apply and include recommendations from professional standards, research-based best practices, and authentic clinical experiences, emphasizing specific urban issues brought by Newark Public Schools to the attention of Seton Hall. The design of the program would be learner-centered and experiential.

To develop GYO, a committee was established, consisting of representatives from the school district, the teachers' and administrators' unions, and the university. Including all stakeholders in program development enhanced program design and created the networks necessary for future program success. The GYO Committee conducted research, assessed current conditions, identified local concerns and needs, designed and reviewed the GYO curriculum, and recruited and selected GYO candidates. Meeting twice a month, the GYO Committee's charge was to design a principal preparation program that addressed the following goals:

1. To identify 25 in-district candidates with great leadership promise
2. To design a leadership course of study and practice that focused on instructional leadership for the purpose of increasing student achievement
3. To design an urban leadership experience that included authentic problem solving as well as field-based experiences that would be the central focus of each course
4. To identify outstanding principals to serve as mentors and course co-instructors

Through collaborative interaction, the committee agreed that Newark's schools are complex systems with complex problems. This requires principals to have high-level skills as instructional leaders, current understanding of and ability to deal with disruptive behavior, knowledge of best practices for meeting the diverse needs of the school community in all its complexity, and strategies for addressing the achievement gap and working within a culture of ongoing change.

The result of the GYO Committee's work was the GYO program. Based on a theoretical framework, GYO is a cohort model, principal preparation program, consisting of careful student recruitment, curriculum work, and a principal internship with mentoring. Even though its focus is on public urban education, GYO also reflects the mission of the university:

Seton Hall University is a major Catholic university. In a diverse and collaborative environment it focuses on academic and ethical development. Seton Hall students are prepared to be leaders in their professional and community lives in a global society and are challenged by outstanding faculty, an evolving technologically advanced setting and values-centered curricula.

Seton Hall's mission encourages reflective practice that focuses on ethical behavior, values, and leadership. On a practical level, the university resides in a pivotal spot, close to Newark, a city filled with the typical myriad of challenges that often confront cities. School districts, in particular, present problems ready for solutions such as GYO. The College of Education and Human Services, at the behest of the Newark Public Schools, agreed to address the problem of the need for highly qualified principals in urban schools by developing the GYO program collaboratively. As an additional incentive, program tuition for all participants was funded by Seton Hall University and the Prudential and Victoria foundations. Local businesses and other foundations also recognized value in this effort and provided financial support in the form of partial tuition and funding for other program enrichment activities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for GYO includes two beliefs: (a) many urban children suffer from toxic stress caused

by the environment in which they live, and (b) principals must be trained to address both educational and environmental issues. According to Shonkoff (2005), precipitated by “extreme poverty, recurrent child physical and/or emotional abuse, chronic child neglect, severe maternal depression, parental substance abuse, or family violence,” toxic stress is the “strong, frequent, and/or prolonged activation of the body’s stress management system in the absence of buffering protection of adult support” (p. 8). Children arriving at school with toxic stress, as is often the case in urban environments, are in no position to learn successfully. It is therefore incumbent upon urban school leaders to create the kind of structured, yet warm, nurturing, loving environment that can minimize or reverse toxic stress, releasing the child’s ability to learn and grow.

The theoretical challenge in training urban school principals relies on the development of best practices, “defined as strategies, activities, or approaches that have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective and/or efficient” (Florida Department of Education, 2005, ¶ 2). To identify GYO as a best practice, the authors identified through the literature the skills necessary for creating competent instructional leaders (Bottoms et al., 2003; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998; Levine, 2005; National Association for Elementary School Principals, 2004; Wallace Foundation, 2003; Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003), the knowledge base required for data-driven decision making (Achilles, 2005), and the method for teaching how to turn theory into sound practice (Lashway, 2003). Activities that help students turn theory into practice include case records, simulations, and extensive internships and mentorships (Achilles, 2005; Klauke, 1990; Levine, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Two surveys were distributed to representative stakeholders from Newark Public Schools. The goal of the first survey was to determine what respondents perceived as the most persistent problems affecting student achievement. The second survey asked school administrators for recommendations for improvements to the GYO program.

RESULTS

Survey 1: Most Persistent Problems

Twenty-five GYO students distributed and collected the surveys from five teachers, five administrators, five central office staff, five support staff, five students, and five parents, resulting in 625 responses. The single open-ended question, requesting additional explanation, was, “What are the three most persistent problems in the Newark Public Schools that, if solved, would significantly increase student success?” Analysis revealed common concerns across all six groups, represented by these three themes:

1. A need for more skillful teachers and administrators, given the increased challenges and accountability in today’s schools
2. A need for more meaningful parental involvement
3. A need for a safe and orderly school environment.

While parental involvement was cited as a need, parents commented that they did not always feel welcome in the schools, and teachers and administrators believe that the parents are not interested in the school. Safety and order were important because of the perceived lack of standards of discipline, the presence of gangs, and the degree of violence that impede student learning. In addition, respondents indicated a need for more cohesive working relationships between and among administrators, teachers, and parents.

Recommendations for GYO Program Improvement

GYO is a principal preparation program. A two-part survey was sent to 75 school administrators asking them to identify and prioritize the three most significant problems they face in their roles. In addition, they were requested to explain any barriers or restraining forces that mitigate the solving of these problems. In the second

part of the survey, respondents were asked to name the knowledge, skills, and character strengths required of future school leaders that would enable them to break through these barriers.

The 37 respondents agreed with the three common themes identified by the rest of the stakeholders: (a) more highly qualified teachers and administrators, (b) increased parental involvement, and (c) order and safety in the school. In response to the second part of the survey, they commented that future principals need specific training as instructional leaders, especially in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and child and adult learning theory. In terms of skills, they said that budgeting, delegating, dealing with bureaucracy, empowering staff, communicating interpersonally and generally, and applying technology were important. Character strengths required of principals, they reported, include the deep, unwavering belief in the educability of all children, the willingness to accept responsibility for student success, the courage to lead in very challenging circumstances, and the faith and determination to “stay the course” when the clearly predictable “storms” came.

GYO PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The collaboration of the Newark Public Schools and Seton Hall University, along with foundation and corporate sponsors, enabled the GYO program to begin in the fall 2004 term. GYO has four major components: (a) cohorts, (b) recruitment, (c) curriculum work, and (d) a principal internship with mentoring.

Cohorts

GYO is constructed as a cohort program in which a group of students begin and, hopefully, end the program together. Proponents of cohort programs claim that cohorts produce positive effects in principal certification programs because adult learning is facilitated when learning is part of a social group structure. Cohort programs also provide greater opportunities for group affiliation, emotional support, motivation, group learning, and active involvement in learning activities that require the interaction of diverse opinions and participants (Barnett & Caffarella, 1992; Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, 2005).

Recruitment

The goal was to locate outstanding teachers with principal potential who represented the diversity of the Newark community. It was well-known that traditional recruiting practices typically produce candidates who do not necessarily mirror the existing demographic composition of the local community or have experience in it (Carr, Chenoweth, & Ruhl, 2003). To attract the desired cohort, the GYO Committee developed and widely distributed informational packets including a fact sheet, a video, newsletters, and a brochure about the Newark Public Schools, Seton Hall University, and the GYO program. The recruitment announcement read, “We are seeking candidates who understand . . . students and issues, who are committed to establishing a collaborative learning environment, who can inspire a collective school vision leading towards improved student achievement and have an unwavering belief in the ability of every child to learn at high levels.”

Following the announcement, a district-wide meeting was held with all school principals and union representatives to review the criteria for nominating and selecting candidates for the GYO program. In addition, educators were encouraged to “tap” any colleagues they already recognized as future leaders for inclusion in the program. The result of the recruitment effort was a pool of more than 200 candidates who were then required to supply academic transcripts, results of the Miller Analogies Test, letters of recommendation, and a writing sample. Following a committee review of applications, a three-member selection committee interviewed 75 candidates, ultimately choosing 27 candidates representing 21 Newark schools and the central office.

Curriculum Work

The role of principal is recognized as being critical to the successful achievement of students and to the development of the school climate (Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Expectations of how that might occur have changed, however. According to the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000), for example, the role of the school principal as manager is no longer applicable, for principals must now fulfill a variety of leadership roles

including instructional, community relationship, and transformational. The content of Seton Hall's master's degree program in education administration already reflected this knowledge when GYO was being developed. Both the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Educators, (NCATE) and the Education Leadership Licensure Consortium (ELLC) supported and recognized that objectives and content of the master's curriculum were solid. In order to make the GYO curriculum "Newark-centric," however, textbooks, course assignments and experiences were modified, concentrating on the specific needs identified through the surveys. In addition, a university professor and a school administrator team-taught the courses.

The GYO Committee expressed concern about course delivery. Should it be traditional or include an online component? To facilitate adult learning, the committee decided on a blended course delivery system—18 credits presented face-to-face on weekends and 15 credits offered online. The online courses were designed to assist students in refining their technology skills while they acquired content knowledge. The cohort was also invited to attend a series of lectures that addressed current school issues in an urban context: (a) creating a positive school climate, (b) celebrating and recognizing teachers, and (c) developing a culture of caring.

Courses were specifically adapted as well. For example, in the curriculum development and curriculum evaluation courses, the cohort of future principals examined and evaluated the Newark district's curriculum, identified areas needing attention, and described how they would address the problem using a faculty meeting simulation approach. In courses on supervision and leadership, students used the *Pathwise® Framework Induction Model* (Educational Testing Service, 2006), a comprehensive mentoring and support program for beginning teachers that also helps develop and sustain teacher quality in support of student learning. They applied this model while engaging in actual observations and post-observation conferences of Newark teachers who volunteered for this activity. Through this authentic process, including case studies, role play, and analysis of actual evaluations with fictitious names and false identifiers, GYO participants developed a solid understanding of how to support teachers and provide direct assistance to them.

Other courses also had unique components. For example, guest lecturers from the Education Law Center in Newark presented and analyzed budgets and court cases in courses on school finance and school law. For the research course, students selected one current problem or need from the survey responses and designed an action research project to try to solve the problem. Two topics selected by GYO students for this project were parent involvement and student discipline. The results of their research were then submitted to the district superintendent for consideration as examples of best practices.

One course unique to Seton Hall's programs in education administration is entitled "The Heart and Soul of Leadership." In this course, GYO students focus on leadership from the inside out. The underlying premise is that effective leadership is as much about whom the leader is as it is about what the leader knows. The belief is that leadership in urban schools, in particular, must go beyond simply knowing and doing . . . to being. The primary activity in this course involved the students' exploring themselves, writing their own personal mission statements, and working on finding their own voices so that they might help others to find theirs.

Principal Internship

GYO includes a principal internship component. Achilles (2000) pointed out that administration in the field of education takes place in schools, but most of the preparation for the principalship occurs outside of schools. In addition, adult learning theory suggests that adults learn best when given an opportunity to apply new skills in authentic settings (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, 2005). SREB called for state departments of education to require future school leaders to "work with teachers to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices, work with faculty and parents to build support for improvement efforts and work with faculty to manage an improvement initiative and evaluate its effectiveness" (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005, p. 8). SREB also suggested that mentor principals be trained and uniform procedures for measuring the intern's performance be in place.

Acknowledging the importance of the internship, the GYO program significantly increased the standard internship requirement from 150 hours in one semester to 600 hours for a full year, including summer. Fifty hours were spent under the mentorship of a principal in a school outside the student's own district. This provided the student with experiences both internal and external to his or her own employment environment. In addition, Seton Hall professors greatly experienced in urban administration provided the students with in-school support

and mentoring. Both internal and external mentors were also invited to participate in ongoing seminars on urban education. For instance, professors, mentors, and students were trained using the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) mentoring model (Carr et al., 2003) and Nel Noddings' (1992) culture of care. The performance of the interns during their internship was rigorously evaluated, and the results were entered into a culminating portfolio of their experience.

CONCLUSION

Newark Public Schools, and other urban districts like it, have been trapped in stormy weather for at least two generations. Oppressive poverty, toxic stress, unfunded mandates, and public policy are but a few of the challenges district-wide. On the school level, leadership challenges center on student achievement and accountability, often with scarce or inadequate resources. In addition, principals are leaving urban schools, and new ones can not be hired quickly enough. Moreover, preparing principals specifically for urban schools requires a new best practice model that addresses the particular needs of urban schools.

The Grow Your Own (GYO) program at Seton Hall University is a 39-credit master's degree program with four basic components: (a) cohort, (b) recruitment, (c) curriculum work, and (d) internship. The constitution of the carefully recruited cohort reflects the diversity of the urban schools where they now teach. The course work that they complete, both in-person and online, respects adult learning theory, reinforces their use of technology, and focuses on urban issues as identified by Newark stakeholders who completed the GYO surveys. Their internships are long, intense, supported, and realistic. Through GYO, students acquire the knowledge, skills, and character strengths required of current urban school principals.

To weather the storm in the schools and arrive at the safe port of improved student learning, new principals must learn that what they do is what Cornel West referred to as "soul craft" (Houston, 2002). For them to have the courage, faith, and unwavering belief in the ability of all children to learn in spite of their circumstances of poverty and toxic stress, urban school principals must have extreme strength of character. Edmonds (1979) said long ago, "We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far." Principals trained in GYO will lead the way and calm the storm of their schools, inspiring teachers to teach and students to learn, while remaining accountable to their stakeholders and true to themselves.

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Parent and Community Outreach: Profiles of Community Internship Experiences

Kathleen D. Rockwood

INTRODUCTION

Barbara and Joseph, two Leadership Candidates in an urban district, were excited about initiating a community internship project that entailed working with the public library to support summer reading. While district personnel noted the dramatic drop-off in students' reading skills each fall, nothing was being done within the district to address the problem in a pro-active way. Summer reading expectations were ignored by many of the students. Barbara and Joseph identified this problem and began to collaborate with the public library. They were excited about making potential linkages between the schools and the library and hosting motivating outreach activities for students and their families. Everything seemed to be going fine until they found out that the library renovation project was going to begin during the summer and that the library would be closed. They wondered why a renovation project that was talked about for seven years had to occur during this critical time when they wanted to use the library as a resource for students and their families. They learned quickly that this was not unusual occurrence in their community. They had to develop a "Plan B" quickly that addressed their goal of impacting summer reading.

This anecdote captures the essence of community outreach efforts. Educators soon realize that they have limited control over many factors. They have to be able to respond to the unexpected. Barbara and Joseph are in a leadership preparation program that seeks to provide candidates with explicit guidance and experience in community engagement efforts. How should this be accomplished in our leadership preparation programs? How can our programs be effective in preparing future school leaders to work with parents and the broader community?

The descriptive study reported here explores one program's attempts to address the leader's role in reaching out to the community and promoting community involvement. The study highlights promising best practices that are integral to the design of the community internship experience at a NCATE-accredited leadership preparation program in New York State that prepares school building leaders. The framework for examining the community engagement experience for future leaders is organized around the following themes: (1) a vision of what constitutes community engagement; (2) knowledge base that supports parent and community outreach for school leaders; (3) skills that are essential to effective community engagement; and (4) effective leadership practices working with the community. Using this framework to review the literature, findings are conveyed through profiles of six Leadership Interns' experiences. Conclusions highlight promising directions and considerations for leadership preparation programs in the area of community outreach.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Community Internship Design

The leadership preparation program at this private college in New York has a community/business internship

that attempts to develop a substantive understanding of community involvement. The underlying premise of this 100-hour internship is that true understanding of community involvement only can occur when theory is integrated with sustained, authentic experience. A redesign in summer 2005 provided a renewed impetus that attempts to push the boundaries of comfort for interns by placing them in different settings and situations that require developing new relationships and working with multiple constituencies. Focus is placed on making explicit connections between the internship experience and the responsibilities of school leaders.

The community internship typically occur during the summer session and lasts for several months. It is designed around acknowledged “best practices” (Orr, 2006) that are reflected in respect for adult learner needs and experiences during the seminars, ongoing integration of theory-praxis, sustained focus on opportunities for reflection, opportunities to practice new skills, and problem-based learning through interns’ field-based experiences and case analysis. Leadership Candidates attend an orientation a semester before the actual internship to support preparation for their internship placements. They have several options: (1) to be placed in an organization that provides community services to schools; (2) to initiate a relationship and placement site with an organization in the community where the Leadership Candidate works; or (3) to create an outreach effort from the school site. All placements and related projects are designed around real needs and problems that can provide relevant learning experiences for the future school leader. Prior to the internship each intern develops an internship proposal that identifies two projects to complete the internship experience. An action plan further delineates specific activities, time frame, and benchmarks of effectiveness.

In addition to their community work, interns attend a bi-weekly seminar and on alternate weeks engage in on-line discussion that frequently focuses on analysis and response to various cases that represent a variety of issues such as cultural proficiency, external communication, parental conflicts, means to involve diverse community constituents, and developing effective partnerships.

Each seminar has a targeted topic that is supported by readings, role plays, exercises, and intern field-based experiences. At the end of the internship each intern must submit multiple forms of documentation in a portfolio that includes project reports, journals, time logs, artifacts that provide evidence of project accomplishments and fulfillment of the competencies, and the Community Internship Competency Instrument.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many school administrators are experiencing conflicts and tensions as they attempt to address increasing challenges and questions posed by the public related to school test scores, student performance, and school expenditures. It is evident that school and building leaders are spending more time interacting and communicating with parents and community members, and that many of them do not feel adequately prepared for this work. The implication is quite clear that more attention must be placed on how future school leaders are prepared for this challenging responsibility.

Current literature does not address how leadership preparation programs are preparing future leaders to engage in community outreach. While there has been a concerted nationwide focus among many leadership programs to revamp their internship experiences to create more substantive, diverse experiences, Orr’s (2006) recent research revealed that University of Colorado is among the few that departs from the traditional experiences by placing Leadership Candidates in non-school settings to further leadership development. Oliver (2006) completed a recent survey in California that investigated assistant principals’ roles with community involvement. He concluded that the role of assistant principals should be expanded to encompass this responsibility, and that they should be provided sufficient preparation for this new role. In New York State, it seems that parent and community involvement work is embedded in school internships that are school-based, but that none of the accredited leadership programs deals with this domain as a separate internship experience (R. Pagerey, personal communication, March 2006).

Vision

Leadership preparation programs have been given a charge and overarching vision for community engagement through the ELCC leadership standards (NPBEA, 2002) that were developed by consensus of the major education organizations (AASA, AACTE, ASCD, CCSO, NAESP, NASSP, NCATE, NCPE, NSBA, UCEA).

These competency-driven national standards state that future school leaders must be able to demonstrate the ability to effectively collaborate with families and community members in order to impact their children's learning experiences, utilizing a variety of strategies to involve and mobilize the various community constituencies. While this domain of community engagement seems straightforward, in practice it represents a high degree of complexity for a seasoned administrator, to say nothing of a beginner. For those of us who are involved in preparing future leaders, we need to reevaluate our practices and examine our effectiveness in developing the competencies and related dispositions to work with parents and community members. What are we doing that is particularly different to help Leadership Candidates walk in the shoes of some of our community constituents and understand their perspectives? To what extent are we placing our Leadership Candidates in diverse experiences? What are we doing that departs from the traditional higher education practices?

Knowledge Base

Leadership preparation programs can draw upon a compelling knowledge base regarding the impact of parent and community involvement on schools. Joyce Epstein's (2002) well recognized research substantiates the impact of community involvement on school improvement efforts. Henderson and Mapp (2002) provide further evidence of the impact of family and community on student achievement. Marzano's (2005) recent meta-analysis, based on 69 studies, clearly substantiates that a school leader's effective outreach to the community can significantly impact (.27) student achievement. It is no surprise that this body of research is reflected in our present accountability environment where the federal government has underscored further the importance of parent and community involvement with the passage of No Child Left Behind (U.S.Gov., 2001).

Community Engagement Skills

Leadership Candidates need to accrue not only the knowledge base but also have the opportunity to practice specific skills that will enable them to engage their constituencies. Three areas emerge in the literature as being key to school leaders' ability to engage in effective community outreach that served as a focus for the community internship design. First, as schools are experiencing an increasingly diverse constituency, school leaders must be able to work with their constituencies in ways that demonstrate cultural proficiency (Lindsay, Roberts, and Campbell Jones, 2005). A second related area is the realm of effective communication. Positive school-community relations hinge on a leader's ability to continuously focus on a complex array of internal and external communications (Fiore, 2002). School-community relations are an area that receives considerable attention in leadership preparation programs. The third area encompasses a leader's ability to orchestrate a community engagement process (Chadwick, 2004) in a systematic manner that creates multiple means to collect and utilize information to engage community action. Finally, many of Marzano's (2005) 21 leadership responsibilities highlight significant leadership actions that should be the focus of skill development in the arena of community outreach.

Community Outreach Practices

Leadership preparation programs can find helpful direction for effective community outreach practices by examining the partnership research and the role of liaisons. Epstein (2002) provides a valuable framework that goes beyond the traditional parent-school interactions and expectations for school leaders who seek meaningful ways of involving families and parents. Professional development school literature (Teitel, 2001, 2003) represents "boundary-crossing" work across organizations and constituencies that can provide models for stages of partnership development and approaches for developing relationships, clarifying roles, learning about each others' organizational cultures, setting up structures to sustain the partnership work, and creating mutual goals that will impact student learning. Sarason (1998) examined "boundary crossing" work by studying several individuals who had jobs that required them to work between different organizations as liaisons. He found that these liaisons demonstrated the "ability to see mutually enhancing connections among individuals, programs, and agencies that on the surface appear to be in different worlds (Sarason, 1998, p.96). He equates this role with the ability to play scrabble and think flexibly. Sarason's (1998) premise is that if educators could change their ap-

proach to working with others outside the schools, substantive reform efforts could be possible. Promising practices from some of the PDS and community partnership literature represent “boundary-crossing” work that should be translated into leadership preparation practices.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The following research questions served as the focus for this exploratory study: (1) What knowledge base supported Leadership Candidates to implement their community internship projects? (2) How did the community internship contribute to a shift in Leadership Candidates’ vision about community and parent involvement? (3) What skills did Leadership Candidates develop during the internship? (4) What insights did Leadership Candidates develop about effective community and parent involvement practices as a result of the community internship?

Data Collection and Analysis

Multiple qualitative data sources were used to understand the impact of the community internship experiences. Primary sources came from each intern’s portfolio, specifically drawing upon the reflective journals, project reports, artifacts, and instructor’s observations. Data were coded according to emerging themes. Further analysis, utilizing the “constant-comparative” method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994) explored the common themes and differences among the interns as they related to each of the questions.

Participants

Profiles of six Leadership Candidates, two of which represent a team effort, were chosen to exemplify a range of experiences with different constituencies and placement arrangements. The individuals represent diverse backgrounds, with most of them working in urban settings. Table 1 provides a demographic overview of the participants. A descriptive overview summarizes each intern’s project placement, focus, and contributions.

Profile 1. Yolanda

Yolanda, a teacher of Hispanic background who worked in a large urban area, initiated a placement with an organization that provides training and support to parents throughout the school district. She wanted to learn more about parents’ concerns and how to engage them more effectively in her school community. Collaborating with the director of the community organization, she developed two needs assessment surveys that targeted parents and teachers in her school. She observed and then led parent workshops that the organization convened.

Table 1. Participant Demographic Information.

Demographic	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Sex	Professional Experience	Current Work Setting
Barbara	54	African American	F	elementary	urban
Joseph	52	African American	M	elementary	urban
Diane	45	Caucasian	F	early childhood special education	suburban
Arthur	62	African American	M	business high school	urban
Henry	43	Caucasian	M	elementary	urban
Yolanda	37	Hispanic	F	elementary	urban

She also impacted the quality of the work at the community agency by providing constructive feedback about the organization's services by acting as an outside observer/participant. Then at Yolanda's school, the needs assessment data opened up extensive dialogue with faculty that caused major changes in their attitudes about parent involvement and future outreach efforts.

Profile 2. Arthur

Arthur, an African American career changer, who teaches at an urban high school, heard about an opportunity at the college and took the initiative. He asked to be involved in a new program, modeled around Prep-for Prep program that was designed to enrich the academic skills and knowledge of high performing minority youth in designated town and cities near the college. The goal of the program is to increase students' chances of getting into Honors, AP, and Gifted and Talented classes in high school. He negotiated his role of assistant director and came as a ready role model for the students. He did not know the players and had only been a student at the college. Given the nature of this start-up partnership between the college and seven schools districts, Arthur's immediate task was to recruit students and sell the programs to schools and parents. Simultaneously, as a member of the leadership team, he was involved in developing and implementing this summer enrichment program. The communication and outreach efforts to the various constituents remained an important part of his responsibility throughout the summer. Based on reported evaluation feedback from parents and students, Arthur contributed leadership to a partnership program that was viewed as a great success and that involved 70 students.

Profile 3. Barbara and Joseph (team effort)

Barbara and Joseph are African American teachers who work in the same urban elementary school. Early on they decided that they wanted to collaborate and focus on a priority need within their district. Knowing that literacy development was a learning priority district wide, they conferred with the district Language Arts Administrator. The project soon took shape by identifying the reading "slippage" that occurred during the summer. As Barbara stated, "Although students [in our school] scored within the 96% of passing the ELA state test, we do not have a high number of students who have scores in the 4th stanine (mastery). In other grade levels, our students are still poor readers. While to an educator this situation creates concern, to an administrator this situation calls for action." The resulting project centered on increasing students' summer reading involvement by coordinating efforts between the school district's summer reading program, the city library program, and other community organizations. They decided to start on a smaller scale by working with four schools in three phases. First, they had to address an immediate problem that required their action in response to students' need for a library card and access to the library. Then they focused on promoting community awareness of the importance of summer reading. Orchestrating citywide reading events, parent workshops, and a family potluck at a church were among the ways that they sought to involve parents, students, and other community organizations in recognizing the importance of reading. Finally, they created a culminating community event, Share a Book Night, that celebrated student reading. This pilot initiative was applauded by the district and serves as a model that is now being further developed by them as they embark on their school internships.

Profile 4. Diane

Diane had a unique situation. She was placed at a high-performing school district full time to complete her school internship. After that was completed, she was hired to assume the role of CSE chair. Simultaneously, as she moved into her new role, the focus of the community internship took immediate shape. She assumed this role knowing that one important problem needed to be addressed immediately. Diane summarized the problem, "Parents have become disenfranchised and are distrustful of the process of identifying children and determining appropriate services." Conditions within the district contributed to an "atmosphere of contention" that was noted by "significant departmental turnover (7 administrators in 7 years) and diminished collaboration between special education and general education staff has affected the efficacy, stability and effectiveness of the Special Education department." Her community internship focused on communication and community building with the parents of special needs students. She approached this problem in a systematic manner by collecting data.

She developed a needs assessment survey that was distributed to all parents of classified children. She created an action plan that reflected the two areas of need: improving communication between the Pupil Services department and parents and providing relevant parent education. Immediate changes and explicit expectations were put in place, resulting in improved response to parent communications at both the elementary and secondary levels within 48 hours, the creation of protocols to assist teachers and administrators to assist them with problematic situations, and increased opportunities for dialogue and education for parents by offering workshops. While Diane is still tracking parental dissatisfaction through such things as number of phone calls to the Superintendent and to the Director of Pupil Personnel Director, she plans on conducting an end-of-year post survey to assess changes in parental concerns.

Profile 5. Henry

Henry works in a large urban community as an ESL teacher in an elementary school. When he asked to be placed in a community organization, his background provided the right match for the needs of a regional homeless program that was housed at a regional education service center. The homeless program had received a State grant to enhance parental outreach efforts and needed more assistance. Henry joined this project initially as a participant/observer to become more aware of the community organization players and resources available to homeless population. His initial project required preparing a State report by collecting regional enrollment and attendance data. He worked closely with social workers to collect and analyze these data. He accompanied his cooperating administrator to meetings or shelters to discuss problems and needs of the homeless. With this background information in place, Henry then proceeded to offer parent workshops at various shelters, focusing on educational rights, dietary affects on learning, and parental involvement with homework. After the internship was formally over, the director subcontracted with Henry to do additional work. When he went back to his school and began his school internship, he found that this new area of expertise emerged as a helpful resource to both educate and to support other faculty about the needs of homeless children.

FINDINGS

Each of the six Leadership Intern's experiences was different, but they shared similar insights and professional growth by being immersed in the outreach projects. Findings are reported for each question.

Question # 1: Leadership Candidates' Visions of Community Outreach

Each of the Leadership Candidates clearly articulated a vision of what they hoped to accomplish through their community engagement efforts. Barbara and Joseph wanted to increase students' summer reading and related motivation to read by involving parents and by mobilizing the support of community organizations. As Barbara stated, "I developed an expanded vision about educating the community about children's needs." Diane sought to create an inclusive school where the leadership modeled what it means to be part of a learning community that seeks to develop a partnership between the parents of the special needs students and the district. Arthur fervently believed in the vision of the college-district partnership project that sought to support higher achievement among minority youth "in order to lay a foundation for them to compete to get into good colleges, good jobs, and ultimately to make a significant contribution to their families and this country." For Henry, "an effective leader needs to be keenly aware of the population that he/she is dealing with." He hoped to go on to create the conditions in schools that would be more responsive and sensitive to the needs of homeless students. Yolanda's internship provided an "eye-opening experience" that reframed her vision of community engagement as a necessity. "A school will not be successful if the staff remains inside, behind closed doors, and does not partner with parents and the local community businesses and organizations.

The Leadership Candidates' visions assumed a new life as each one reflected on the specific beliefs that guided his/her leadership actions. A desire to make a difference surfaced as one driving belief that was articulated and shared by all six of the Leadership Candidates. Most of them also felt that their actions spoke to their commitment to the vision. They were conscious of the importance of administrators modeling their value of community outreach. Three of the interns tried to focus on being open and responsive. For Diane, this meant

taking some risks to be more vulnerable in her interactions with parents. She was guided by a “respect for the parents’ rights” and the “belief that parents had something important to say.” Barbara’s belief that “obstacles are problems to be solved” was shared by two other interns as well. These beliefs seemed to provide the beacon that helped each of the interns stay on the course and persevere with their work.

Question #2: Knowledge Base that Supported Leadership Candidates’ Internship Projects?

Two areas were identified as being critical to each of the Leadership Candidates’ ability to conduct their community internship projects. First, they all learned how important it is to be knowledgeable about the community in which they were working. While they each went about this in different ways, they sought this knowledge through face-to-face exchanges, going to meetings, actively networking, and being very observant. Barbara and Joseph did this by getting out into the community, approaching different groups that might be possible partners in their literacy initiative. Even though Barbara felt that she knew her community quite well after having lived and worked in it for a long time, she found that she had to reeducate herself about her community because so much of it had changed. Diane made a point to become more knowledgeable about the parents in her new district by being visibly present to introduce herself and to hear concerns. Arthur learned a great deal about each of the six districts involved with the college partnership through his active role in recruiting students for the enrichment program. He networked to become more informed about the potential resources that were available through the partnering organizations. He made a point to be accessible to parents individually and in groups as he listened to their concerns and expectations. He had to quickly assimilate information about multiple organizations and constituencies. Henry knew little about the homeless community. He began his internship by observing and going around to various homeless shelters and introducing himself to various community organization players. Like Henry, Yolanda had to orient herself to an organization that was unfamiliar. She did this initially by observing parent training sessions, going to community organization meetings, and talking at length with the director.

The interns also sought to inform their outreach efforts further by consulting the research. For Barbara and Joseph, this meant consulting the research related to summer reading and the means to bridge the achievement gap for urban youth. Debbie researched effective parental outreach strategies in the region and then set out to develop her own needs assessment. The needs assessment served as a primary tool to obtain specific information about parental concerns. Arthur referred to Epstein’s (2002) parent and community engagement framework as providing important direction to the development of a partnership with families, community, and the schools. Henry quickly became an expert on the status of homeless by examining regional data and by reviewing research related to the causes of and ways to support homeless families. He learned about the McKinney-Vento Act and the legal rights of homeless students and their parents. Similar to Arthur, Yolanda really studied Epstein’s (2002) research. The knowledge she developed about the framework helped her reconceptualize work with parents.

Question #3: Skills Developed by Leadership Candidates during the Internship

Six leadership skill domains emerged among the findings (refer to Table 2). Three areas will be discussed that were developed by all six of the interns that included implementing specific outreach strategies, modeling effective communication skills, and engaging in pro-active problem solving. Barbara and Joseph focused on orchestrating outreach through events that educated and celebrated family involvement with reading. Arthur planned a final celebration that recognized all partners including students, college personnel, parents, and school district personnel to recognize the accomplishments of the students and the contributions of all partners in the first year of the enrichment program. His recruitment efforts served as a form of education for the parents who were considering enrolling their children in the partnership program. Diane, Arthur, Yolanda, and Henry orchestrated activities that sought to create positive linkages among the partners by soliciting information and needs in order to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices, or in Arthur’s case, of an enrichment program.

Each intern demonstrated a range of effective communication skills, with particular focus on listening well. They each learned to target communications to their varied audiences that represented multiple constituencies.

Table 2. Skills Demonstrated.

Skills	Effective communication	Varied outreach strategies	Team work	Systemic view	Pro-active problem solving	Recognition	Effective planning
Barbara	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joseph	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Diane	X			X	X		X
Arthur	X	X	X		X	X	X
Henry	X	X	X	X	X		
Yolanda	X	X		X	X	X	X

As Barbara noted, “This project required keeping everyone in the loop Personal contact was critical.” Joseph saw that “our willingness to listen enabled the parameters of the project to grow When you listen and people buy into a vision, ideas and assistance come from all directions.” Diane straddled internal and external communications continuously. What worked best for her was to try to be transparent and “honest by explaining my thought processes.” Arthur was effective communicating with parents because he showed that he was genuinely interested and he anticipated concerns and questions. Henry learned to adjust and “tone down his language” in order to communicate more effectively with homeless families. Yolanda and Diane carefully attended to the language of the questions in their needs assessment surveys.

Problem solving was at the heart of each intern’s project. Barbara and Joseph found that their project was rife with challenges so they had to respond accordingly through flexible, yet focused planning. Diane and Yolanda were undaunted by the poor parental relations within their districts. They each sought to get to the root of the problems by taking a data-based approach. The results of their needs assessments provided the forum for dialogue and future planning. Diane did this by working within the district; while Yolanda chose to work with and between the community parent training organization and her school. Arthur quickly learned that new programs are confronted with unanticipated problems. He responded immediately to problems and, when needed, developed procedures and guidelines to address similar situations in the future. Henry demonstrated resourcefulness and astute analytic ability as he prepared the State homeless report.

Question #4: Leadership Candidates’ Insights about Effective Community Engagement Practices

Each of the interns developed many compelling insights about leadership specific actions that are integral to effective outreach efforts. Many of the interns’ insights mirrored their evolving skills previously discussed. Table 3 represents shared insights about the leader’s role in engaging the community that include: challenge assumptions, create a positive climate, tackle problems in a pro-active manner, maintain a flexible and responsive stance, listen and attend to all communications, value team work and develop an ongoing network.

One new theme emerged about the power of creating a positive climate through the initiation of simple actions and overtures. Barbara and Joseph discussed the value of attending community forum meetings. After receiving a wonderful reception at a community church, Barbara commented, “The administrator has to be willing to go out and bring people in instead of waiting for people to come in.” Diane learned that the sheer act of sending out a needs assessment signaled an important message to staff and to the parents of special needs students that “parents were going to be given a real voice.” The door was opened by sending out the needs assessment. She was surprised at “how easy it is to engage the community . . . It is all in the presentation.” Arthur was “reassured by the strong participation and positive input from parents at the culminating partnership celebration event. He reflected on the power of this event in bringing closure to the program and recognizing all constituents. Barbara and Joseph had a similar response to their outreach efforts as he commented, “There is not enough celebration of education in our community.” Henry and Yolanda learned the importance of the leader’s initial approach or contact with parents in creating positive linkages between home and school. Yolanda came to see

Table 3. Insights about Effective Outreach Practices.

Insights	Beware of assumptions	Create a positive climate	Engage in pro-active problem solving	Be flexible & responsive	Listen: Communication is “glue”	Value team work	Develop network
Barbara	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joseph	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Diane	X		X	X	X		
Arthur		X	X	X	X	X	X
Henry	X	X		X	X	X	X
Yolanda	X	X	X	X	X		X

that “we [as professionals] have the responsibility to reach out and strengthen these partnerships. She commented, “It was most significant to me when parents went out of their way to give me feedback and say, ‘Finally someone cares about our opinions.’” Henry realized that the school leader must often take the first step to ensure that “effective transfer of information is in place so that [homeless] students can receive the services they are entitled to.”

Flexibility emerged as another strong theme for all six of the interns. As Joseph commented, “Just because Barbara and I wanted something to happen in a certain way didn’t mean that it was going to happen. We had to be willing to let the parameters of the project grow but still maintain control to ensure that we would reach our goals.” For Diane, flexibility meant adjusting her schedule so she could be responsive to parents’ concerns. Arthur saw his role each day as one of serving the needs of the partnership project by being responsive to emerging needs. Yolanda learned that she had to be patient and flexible with her expectations as she strived to develop a working relationship with another organization.

Finally, five of the interns noted that the internship challenged previously held assumptions in ways that would affect their future work. Like peeling layers of an onion, Barbara and Joseph found that they had to reexamine assumptions about their community. One assumption was that many of the students had library cards. Diane started out thinking that there is never enough communication, but came to see that administrators need to create some parameters and balance in reaching out to the community, especially in a high-demand district where the need for continuous communication can drain an administrator’s time and energy. Prior to the needs assessment, Diane made assumptions that parental concerns were serious. Instead, she learned that “the parents just wanted to speak to someone.” Henry’s practical exposure to homeless families reframed the assumptions he harbored about the situations of homeless, ELL, and immigrant students. As previously stated, Yolanda found that her internship helped her cast aside “the unfortunate common belief that if parents did not become involved with school activities, it was their problem.”

CONCLUSIONS

While this internship is conceived as work in progress, the apparent impact on six Leadership Candidates’ vision of community engagement, knowledge, skills, and insights about effective practice, attests to it being a model that deserves attention among other leadership preparation programs. The interns did not share common community contexts or projects, but they did develop common understandings about effective community engagement approaches and strategies. The problem-based design of the internship provides an authentic way to apply community outreach strategies that require considerable initiative and creative problem solving. Most important, the actual experience of getting into the community and becoming actively engaged with parents, community organizations, and community constituents provides a critical learning opportunity. Yolanda reflected that by stepping across her familiar boundary of school, she benefited from an experience that “could not be conveyed through isolated assignments, readings, or simulations.”

However, the internship experience cannot stand alone and must be grounded in research and ongoing reflections. Through reflection, each intern was able to stay in touch with his/her reactions and underlying beliefs.

The interns focused more on their emotional competencies (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) as they each strived to cultivate greater self-awareness and effectiveness in working with others. The community internship experience also enabled each intern to broaden his/her thinking about the scope of a school community. They all made a shift by adopting a much larger systems view of community (Senge, 1990) than when they started the internship.

Building on the experience of these six interns, leadership preparation programs offer a critical learning opportunity that can make a lasting impression on a future leader's beliefs about and approach to working with the community. Since community outreach is now a necessity for all schools, leadership preparation programs have an important charge to prepare leaders who view community involvement as a responsibility that they will embrace and model. Hopefully this study will encourage dialogue and exploration of different ways to prepare future leaders to engage in community outreach. Toward that end, leadership preparation programs need to respond to the recent recommendations made by various researchers and critics of leadership preparation programs who call for innovative, interdisciplinary designs that provide diverse field-based experiences that are grounded in real problems, that prepare future leaders how to collaborate, and that strengthen the connections between theory and practice by developing sustained partnerships and dialogue between school districts and universities (Kochan, Bredson, and Riehl, 2002; Hall, 2006; Heifetz, 2006; Murphy, 2002; Orr, 2006; Pounder, Reitzug, and Young, 2002).

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Higher Education and School District Partnerships: Creating a Best Practice Environment for Field Experience

Marc Shelton, Stephen Cathers and Larry Tew

Leadership academies have been part of the administrator preparation landscape since the 1980s, though the focus has been on school districts developing a cadre of prospective administrators or recruiting and maintaining newly hired personnel (Schlechty, 2005). In many states, the professional licensure commission requires involvement of “regionally accredited” institutions whose programs have been approved for the preparation of teachers and administrators (Oregon Administrative Rules—OARS 2006). The relevance of university preparation programs has been the center of attention in publications around the topic of school leadership. The “curricular balance” of integrating theory into practice through combining university classroom activities and meaningful field experience requires the collaboration of theoreticians and practitioners in university and school district partnerships (Davis, 2005; Levine, 2005). Its implication on the preparation of future principals is formidable. Expanding learning opportunities to all students improves the quality of preparation when the goals and objectives of the preparation program include district-specific activities to improve the effectiveness of preparing school leaders within a sponsoring school district.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different states have published their own lists of expectations for administrative candidates, and all but two states require certification for principals (Feistritzer, 2002). The average number of expectations listed per state is 39, with Hawaii having the fewest at 1 standard and Arkansas having the most with 435 competencies (Adams & Copland, 2005). Requirements to become an administrator differ from state to state as licensing is not standardized, though similarities exist regarding what competencies a prospective administrator should meet. In addition to the varying standards, there are alternate administrative programs designed to lead the candidate to licensure. Non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses offer opportunities for potential administrators to study and experience firsthand what is involved in being a school administrator.

An example of a non-profit preparation program for principals, and one that requires a person to spend almost no time in a university classroom, is New Leaders for New Schools, created by Jonathan Schnur in 2001. This one-year program emphasizes hands-on experience and each of its candidates is assigned to a mentor in an urban school (Cohen, 2002). Other examples of alternative licensure programs include The Boston Principal Fellowship Program, The First Ring Leadership Academy in Cleveland, Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago (LAUNCH), New Jersey Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership (NJ EXCEL), and The Principals Excellence Program in Kentucky (Levine, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). These non-traditional programs differ in terms of the specific standards they expect their graduates to meet, but all of them require an extended practicum rather than a traditional university curriculum of extensive coursework as a means of assessing each candidate’s fitness to serve as an administrator. Further, these non-traditional programs have a performance-based curriculum, tied to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

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While some researchers are encouraged by the success of alternative licensure options, these programs train a small number of future administrators and are located in large, urban population centers. For this reason, traditional university-based licensure programs remain the most common means of preparing new administrators. University-based programs also vary from one institution to another, but successful programs share similar components in terms of preparing administrators for their first position. While states have adopted standards, very little research exists regarding which courses give candidates knowledge, skills, and performance experiences to meet these standards. Some education leaders have advocated for a university curriculum that puts more emphasis on courses that would improve student achievement (i.e., curriculum/instruction, assessment, and data analysis) and less seat time devoted to bells, busses, and budgets covered in courses with an emphasis on management, supervision, finance, and school law (Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003). Some argue that classroom instruction for potential administrators be research-driven but for the most part research focuses to what extent leadership theory shapes effective leaders rather than evaluating the content of administrator preparation courses related to hands-on, experiential learning (Davis, 2005).

Preparation Standards for Field Experience

While there is no single definition of what constitutes “the perfect administrator,” all states require certain skills or competencies for those who apply for administrator licenses or credentials that are best learned through experiences. This has moved preparation programs away from seat-time and course-credit accumulation to a proficiency-based model to assess the readiness of aspiring administrators. A partial list of knowledge and skills needed for a building principal may include the following (Peterson & Kelley, 2001):

- Identifying and articulating the school’s mission;
- Providing instructional leadership;
- Managing and administering policies and procedures;
- Developing budgets and coordinating resource use;
- Organizing improvement efforts;
- Supervising staff and assessing student learning;
- Building effective parent involvement programs; and
- Shaping positive school cultures.

The ISLLC standards include 196 separate expectations, which were completed in 1996 by 24 member states and endorsed in some form by a total of 41 states. These expectations are divided between six broad standards, as follows (ISLLC, 1996):

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by . . .
 - facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
 - advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
 - ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective environment.
 - collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
 - acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
 - understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

The Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) spell out the state’s requirements for administrative licensure. In a recent license redesign effort, the Oregon Professors of Educational Administration (ORPEA) worked with the administrators’ professional organization, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA), to recommend the framework of the Educational Leadership Constituents Council (ELCC) standards to the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) for new Oregon standards in administrator preparation programs.

In addition to Oregon's effort to strengthen the cultural competency and ethical practice components of the ELCC standards, the Oregon standards include the implementation of a rigorous internship of 360 hours of experience at multiple grade levels, identified only as "performance" indicators in the ISLLC standards. The ELCC standards define the internship as "significant opportunities for candidates to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified (in the Standards) through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively by the institution and school district personnel" (ELCC, 2002).

While some may argue that individual states have too few requirements or too many, a bigger issue remains as to how candidates demonstrate mastery of whatever skills are required by their state licensing board. What is the most effective way of preparing individuals to become successful school leaders? Bottoms (2003) stated that:

[Current principals] believe the most valuable components of their training were well-designed field experiences that provided opportunities to do the following:

- Observe effective school leaders;
- Practice school leadership by working with others to solve specific problems with curriculum and instruction; and
- Interact with university faculty who have both practical and research-based knowledge of effective school practices. (p. 16)

According to Patrick Forsyth, the Williams Professor of Educational Leadership at Oklahoma State University ((Norton, 2002):

Much technical knowledge can be delivered and learned in the classroom and over the Web. But practice knowledge requires being at someone's elbow, watching someone practice who's been doing this a long time, learning how to critique what you see, talking with other people about it, and making comparisons and contrasts. (p. 5)

A key component of most university-based licensure programs is getting the candidates out into the day-to-day routine in some type of internship or job shadow. While most candidates enter the field with an educational background, seeing things from an administrator's viewpoint is a crucial element in their learning. While 90% of potential administrators get a hands-on taste of what the job entails, some university programs require only a minimum amount of time in the field that occur at the end of their licensure program (Davis, 2005). As part of the field experience offered by internships or job shadows, more and more universities are connecting prospective administrators with a mentor from the school in which the candidate works. The mentor serves the same role that a cooperating teacher does with a student teacher—offering support, feedback and advice to the aspiring administrator. The mentoring administrator can be a valuable resource for the prospective administrator and serves as an important link between classroom learning and practical application. One school district in California recognized the value of mentoring for prospective administrators and expanded the model to pair up a veteran principal with six first-year principals through regular phone calls, site visits and job shadows, resulting in fewer first-year frustrations of new administrators feeling like they are on their own (Lovely, 1999).

School-based Preparation

A growing trend and one that receives positive marks from program completers is the idea of grouping administrative candidates together into learning groups or cohorts. Students begin their program with a cohort, strengthening the connections for improved learning during their time at the university (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Members of the cohort get to know each other well, and individuals who go through this type of program are able to share ideas and support one another throughout their program and beyond into their first years as an administrator. Besides supporting one another in their shared experiences, cohorts often work in teams to problem solve issues that are current to field experience situations resulting in a just-in-time opportunity for extending classroom learning to the workplace. Furthermore, evidence shows that "cohorts can foster improved academic learning and program completion rates among administrative credential candidates" (Davis, 2005, p. 10). These benefits extend past the completion of the licensure program as "teachers give higher ratings to the leadership practices of principals who participated in cohort training structures" (p. 10). Perhaps this is due to the collegial nature of their preparation (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

In conclusion, candidates wishing to earn an administrative license follow a prescribed course of study from a university. This is still the most common pathway to licensure. However, innovative licensing programs, run by private organizations and non-profit groups, are gaining momentum as alternative routes to earning an administrative license. Differences still exist from state to state regarding what skills new school administrators need. Further differences exist in determining the most effective route to gaining these skills described in standards developed at the national level. Classroom instruction is still a major emphasis of most university-based administrative licensure programs. Internships, mentoring and cohort programs, coupled with university/school district partnerships, have been shown to be effective components of administrator preparation.

UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION

While the presence of internships, mentors, and cohorts contributes to the effectiveness of administrator preparation programs, a factor that influences these components is the establishment of a close working relationship between universities and school districts. Although at first glance it would seem that this university/school district relationship would be a given, it is not always the case. According to Forsyth, preparation programs and school districts are “uneasy collaborators . . . they are institutions that are quite different in how they operate and how they think” (Norton, 2002, p. 5). In terms of university administrative licensure preparation programs, universities that have a collaborative relationship with a particular school district are more effective in providing students with a meaningful and relevant experience and have a shared accountability for preparing future leaders (Bottoms, 2003; Norton, 2002).

Most examples of collaboration between universities and schools are for the purpose of recruiting people of color and for jobs in high-need areas through teacher education programs. George Fox University extended this model to its graduate education programs by partnering with the Woodburn School District outside of Portland, Oregon to recruit internationally prepared in-service teachers and help them earn the Initial Teaching License so they could be highly-qualified teachers working in classrooms to meet the needs of Hispanic and Russian speaking students as part of the Title II – Quality Assurance in Teaching project. In 1997, the Implementation Plan to Establish University-School Teacher Education Partnerships in North Carolina was developed by the Deans’ Council on Teacher Education, The University of North Carolina, and the Board of Governors which targeted \$6 million and identified “guiding principles” for partnerships to (Bottoms, 2003):

- Strengthen relationships and shared responsibilities;
- Build on successes of current models and establish professional development partnerships;
- Extend and improve the school-based components of both initial preparation and continuing professional development programs;
- Strengthen the linkage between the theory and practice of teaching and learning, thereby narrowing the gap between what is known to be effective practice and how it is applied and;
- Focus and share resources of the colleges and universities.

If a relationship does not exist between the university and the school district, it is important that both institutions recognize the value of collaboration. Forsyth stated a university benefits from “a steady stream of students coming to them in a predictable way. It eliminates some of the inefficiencies of unpredictability It gets university people into schools, and sometimes it’s been hard to get them there” (Norton, 2002, p. 7). In addition to a “steady stream” of candidates, other research suggests that a close partnership between universities and school districts makes it easier to ensure that high quality candidates are admitted to the program, a sometimes difficult dilemma for selecting candidates who are self-referred and do not have support or promise to complete the preparation program and contribute as an administrator in the district’s schools (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Regarding benefits to the school district, Forsyth continued (Norton, 2002):

- The district should get people trained in the job the way they want them trained. They will be able to raise their level of confidence in newly prepared leaders because they’re going to be involved in shaping the knowledge base and the skill set for these people. (p. 7)

Once the university and the school district have decided that mutual benefits derive from collaboration, deci-

sions must be made regarding the vision and goals of the partnership. To be effective, both parties must be sure they share the same goals for graduates of the program. Sometimes this process is more of a challenge for the university as courses that had been included in the administrative license curriculum may not be relevant and therefore may need to be redesigned to better meet the needs of the school district. Beyond adjusting course content, it is suggested (Bottoms, 2003):

[P]artnering universities and school districts address the following issues:

- How much time is needed for priority topics and how deeply should they be studied?
- What challenging assignments based on schools' real instructional problems will the program include?
- What field-based experiences will enable potential leaders to observe and practice leadership work with guidance from expert mentors?
- What performance assessments will ensure that aspiring principals can work with others to improve curriculum and instructional practices?
- How can the preparation program's faculty and its delivery of instruction best be organized to implement an integrated academic and field-based approach? (p. 8)

If the time is taken to address the above issues, the collaboration between university and a school district has a greater chance of being successful.

Partnerships between universities and school districts vary, but one common area of strength is the idea of relevance. Field experiences are much more valuable if the university's curriculum is tailored to address the needs of the individual's particular district. Professors are able to not only prepare material relevant to the district in terms of examples and problem-solving exercises, but they can adjust to discuss the "news of the day" as it relates to the concerns of that unique school district. While almost any hands-on experience in the field is beneficial to prospective administrators, having a close working relationship between the university and the school district makes the experience all the more valuable. As Forsyth observed (Norton, 2002):

The learning situations need to be around projects that are important to the school. You don't want to create a 'pullout' program. When you have interns and graduate students involved in authentic work, then you're not wasting their time, and you're helping them gain skills and knowledge that will help them raise performance in their own schools one day. (p. 8)

Not only are field experiences more valuable in a collaborative effort, but mentoring and cohort programs are also enriched.

Because mentors and cohorts alike share many similarities already, based on their common school culture, there is a greater likelihood for positive team relations to be built (Lovely, 1999). By being mentored by someone in his/her own district, the aspiring administrator has greater accessibility to that person than might be available if he or she were partnered with someone from a district other than his or her own. The pairing of potential administrators with a cohort made up of fellow administrative candidates from the same district can create more of a buy-in to the relationship, and is less contrived than if the participants only saw each other during their time in the university classroom. The element of district sponsorship ensures mentors are working with candidates who have the likelihood of moving into positions opened with retirements and attrition.

These "grow-your-own" types of administrative programs also benefit the individuals involved, as well as the school districts. Districts have found that graduates of these programs make a quicker and more effective transition into the principalship because they understand the climate and culture of the schools (Lovely, 1999; Peterson & Kelley, 2001). Chenoweth, Carr and Ruhl (2002) asserted that an internship, practicum, or field experience activity requires programs to overcome barriers to be successful. "Chief among them is the limited time most administrator candidates are able to devote to authentic practicum activities . . . most candidates are full-time teachers, counselors, or other school personnel who must attend to job responsibilities . . ." (p.23). Chenoweth (2002), reporting that best practices in preparing individuals for administrative positions posed questions based on the fact that the "practicum is an essential element of a sound preparation program.

- How might programs integrate course content to support practicum activities?
- How might practicum events be used to shape course content?

The length and quality of a practicum experience are linked. “How might administrator candidates and districts be supported to provide extended in-depth practicum opportunities?”

Finally, the on-site mentor is an important part of a successful practicum. What might be done to make the mentor—administrator candidate experience beneficial to both parties?”

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to test some of the conclusions discussed above, a survey was conducted by the Oregon University System. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of programs preparing administrative candidates since a license redesign in 1999. The survey instrument was responded to and completed by 232 of 613 licensed teacher leaders in the state. The State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) supported a survey of graduate students who completed their administrator license preparation program and earned the Oregon Initial Administrator License (Greenfield, 2002). This study was replicated in the David Douglas School District in 2006 with a focus on analyzing the questions specific to the effectiveness of the practicum using SPSS 14.0 for Windows, a predictive analytics software package, specifically chi square tests for differences between proportions at the 95 to 99 percent probability. Comments were analyzed using NVivo 7 from QSR International.

Demographics and Participants

The David Douglas School District (DDSD) is an independent school district located in east Multnomah County in Portland, Oregon. The district consists of nine elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, and one alternative high school. Nine thousand students attend school in the DDSD and more than 400 teachers are employed in DDSD. There are six district administrators and 21 school administrators (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). In the 1990s, the DDSD implemented a program called Building Educational Leaders Locally (BELL) with the intent to introduce current teacher leaders to administration with an overview course. In 2001, the Educational Foundations and Leadership department formalized a partnership agreement with the DDSD to assist in preparing administrators as the district was looking at a 60% turnover of current principals due to retirements by the 2004-05 school year.

One notable feature of the partnership was discounting the student tuition (a \$200 flat fee) charged for the nine-month practicum to recognize reduced university oversight as the practicum experiences focused on district initiatives and utilized a district administrator as the supervisor. Another distinctive feature was to offer courses at the district offices to accommodate students and to integrate district/county-specific projects as assignments, which attracted other students in outlying areas. During the period of the study, there were 31 teachers enrolled in coursework for the Initial Administrator License, and seven candidates were employed as full-time administrative interns funded by grant dollars. As of the 2005-06 school year, six of the students were serving as administrators at the building or district office level.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

By analyzing the results of the 2002 study as applied to the practicum experience, the newly trained respondents provided input on: the goals and expectations of the program, the value of course activities and teaching strategies and activities during practicum. The authors recommend changes to the practicum as follows:

Supervision and support by mentoring principal/administrator during the practicum and university supervisor support during site visits were most important and an opportunity to see administrators in action was of moderate importance;

Supervision and support by mentoring principals were moderately adequate and the support of university supervisors and the ability to see administrators in action were less adequate;

Integration of field and course work were most valuable teaching strategies;

Assuming the principal's job, managing student discipline, job-shadowing the principal, leading efforts

in curriculum and instruction, observing teachers, and leading staff development were the most useful practicum assignments;

Supervision of the lunchroom, supervision of students at after school activities, and individual research projects were the least useful practicum assignments; and

Changes to develop more practical projects, improve mentor/supervisor relationships, and focus more time on important issues were cited most frequently by respondents.

The “emphasis issues” centered on course content, skills, instructional priorities for areas that would most benefit a principal during first years of employment, and using meaningful and relevant classroom topics and strategies.

By comparing the responses in the DDS survey to the earlier responses, the concerns of practicum completers from around the state were not expressed by DDS candidates in that:

Problem-based learning was district specific and were real-life cases instead of applying vignettes from other settings;

Mentor/supervisor relationships were not expressed as concerns as the roles were assumed by personnel who were vested in the learning and success of these aspiring administrators;

Time focused on projects was beneficial to the mentors in that they were provided with another set of hands to complete tasks that were purposefully assigned and central to the mission of the school in relationship to the consolidated district improvement plan, and

Reflective practices integrated within coursework and discussions with mentors and professors applied to current leadership situations were beneficial during the field experience.

This research helps to provide a picture of improved preparation of future administrators through the lens of a university/school partnership as it provides a model for collaboration between preparation institutions and the school districts who hire program completers. The implications not only include information on the structure and process, but on the feedback loop that is productive for continual improvement of preparation programs. Interviews with the DDS superintendent led to revisions in the program related to pertinent experience for financial management of schools and the assistant superintendent commended the “balance between rigor and relevant practicality.” This has been useful for national accreditation self-assessment and ensures the preparation of qualified candidates for positions to meet the demand of the increasing complexity of the work and increasing job opportunities due to escalated retirement of current administrators. An additional benefit to the university was the opportunity for faculty to remain current in the leadership issues and programs important to the effectiveness of a pre K–12 school district.

If a university wished to evaluate the effectiveness of its administrator preparation program, a recommended method would be to look at the achievement level of schools led by their graduates over the course of several years. However, if the graduates of the university had only been out in the field a short time, a more realistic approach to measuring the effectiveness of its program would be to conduct a survey of the graduates themselves and their supervisors to determine what was most helpful in preparing them for their new job and what they wished they had learned before they accepted their present role. It is a luxury to have candidates with paid intern experience and an extreme challenge in the current funding priorities of public schools. Providing a mutual opportunity through a university/school partnership is an inexpensive and effective way to leverage resources and ensure quality preparation for future leaders who will meet the burgeoning needs of schools in filling principal positions with excellent administrators who are ready, willing and able to fulfill their administrative responsibilities.

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Best Practices: Statewide Collaborations to Strengthen School Leadership

Jenny S. Tripses

INTRODUCTION

Through the Statewide Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP), various stakeholders throughout a Midwest state have collaborated for several years on improvement of school leadership. This chapter details the work of one subcommittee charged to develop a framework of elements of effective university administrator preparation programs. Ongoing discourse on the subject of school leadership revealed a strong concern about school leadership development coupled with misconceptions on the part of all stakeholders of university preparation programs, accreditation processes already in place, barriers to effective school leadership, and rapidly changing realities of school leadership. All participants learned from the process.

The paper is part of the work of the Illinois State Action Educational Leadership Project (IL-SAELP), an initiative funded through The Wallace Foundation and housed at Illinois State University. The group was convened because of the increasing recognition that expectations for school leaders are changing rapidly and of the need for university preparation programs to adapt to changing expectations. Shifting expectations for school leadership are due in part to increasing diversity of students, financial disparities (particularly in Illinois, which consistently ranks in the bottom 10% nationally in state support for public schools), accountability through No Child Left Behind and other initiatives, and a projected retirement of a high percentage of experienced administrators. Criticism of old “factory” models of schools created at the turn of the last century during another time of rapid societal change (industrialization and high immigration rates), and within which many preparation programs still function, presents the impetus for the call for new models of principal preparation in the state. The IL-SAELP Administrator Preparation Committee sought to understand existing effective practices as well as barriers that impede educational administration programs to make recommended changes to improve preparation of future school leaders.

The paper is based on the collective recommendations of a committee made up of practicing principals and superintendents, educational administration professors, a representative from the State Board of Higher Education, a state school board leader, and SAELP staff. The committee drew upon current peer reviewed research on the preparation of school leaders, reports derived from funded research projects not published in peer reviewed venues (such as Levine, 2005), the state’s professional leadership standards, Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards, as well as existing collaborative models between universities and school districts in the state to formulate its recommendations.

Assigned to identify “elements of effective preparation programs which prepare principals to successfully address the challenges of instructional leadership to guide and implement both school and student improvement,” the committee sought to form recommendations to create a framework intent upon building sustainable capacity to improve school leadership in Illinois schools (Fullan, 2005). Recommendations contained in the final report of the committee were compiled with other committees working through SAELP and provided for consideration to a special commission formed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to address the Levine

Report of 2005. This paper includes a description of effective preparation programs as conceptualized by the committee, systemic considerations, and lessons learned by a professor of an educational administration program. Serving as co-chair of the committee, I seek here to accurately represent the collective thoughts of the group and take full responsibility if that is not the case.

DESCRIPTION OF EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS

From the beginning, the committee struggled to respond to concerns about leadership development as framed by the Levine (2005) report, which focused on administrator preparation programs, leaving the impression that strengthening school leadership resided solely at the university door. After much discussion, the committee eventually conceptualized leadership preparation by looking at leadership development on a continuum from initial preparation programs through the induction of new administrators (usually years 1–5), and finally into the professional development stage after approximately five years of experience.

Strengthening school leadership is a worthy but complex task. The committee was charged with the importance of dedicated stakeholders improving preparation of Illinois school leaders. They were encouraged to proceed without blame or defensiveness in ways that recognize complexities of school leadership. In sharing responsibility for leadership development, the group recognized the need to attend to understanding existing practices, factors in the state issues that inhibit school leadership but supports student learning, and research on best practice.

University/District Collaborations

Collaboration based upon mutual goals of strengthening school leadership became a thread that ran through resulting work of the committee. Collaboration was defined as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and a sharing of resources and rewards” (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). Existing collaborations that informed the work of the committee included university district partnerships created through grants. Based upon lessons learned from these efforts, the committee envisioned expansion of the benefits through possible collaborations to provide multiple internship experiences for graduate students coordinated by regional superintendent offices involving local school districts and universities.

At the state level, members of the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration have worked over the past several years to strengthen Illinois school leadership. Quoting from a publication based on a study of Illinois internship programs, ICPEA members concluded, “We intend to exercise leadership through a newly defined sense of identity, a clearer vision of what leadership for Illinois schools needs to become, and a strong sense of commitment to work with others to make that vision a reality.” (Tripses, Philhower, Halverson, Noe, & Morford, 2005).

“Key to the success of any state effort to support leadership for America’s schools is a commitment among educational leadership stakeholders to finding common ground and working interdependently toward the realization of jointly developed goals” (Young & Kochan, 2004, p. 124). The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) identified stakeholders with an interest in high quality leadership preparation as higher education institutions, state agencies and governmental units, local and intermediate districts, professional organizations, and other agencies such as centers, academies, unions, etc. (cited in Young & Kochan, 2004). Collaboration should center on identification of future leaders (selection processes), quality preparation, restructuring preparation programs, program evaluation, and support for quality programs. Educational excellence and equity for all children involves recognition that the motivations and work of stakeholders are interdependent (Jackson and Kelley, 2002, Young & Kochan, 2004).

Course Content, Standards, and Assessments

Illinois programs are required to align with the Illinois Standards for School Leadership. NCATE accredited programs (approximately 50% in Illinois) align their to the ELCC standards. These standards are similar to the

Illinois Standards for School Leaders with two exceptions. The Illinois Standards for School Leaders provide performance indicators, while the ELCC standards are organized around elements for each standard. The other difference is that the Illinois Standards for School Leaders do not address the internship, which is addressed in ELCC Standard 7. This issue will be addressed in the section on the internship. Essential elements for a strong preparation program require a continuous improvement process based upon program self-evaluation, required rigorous leadership experiences during the internship, and continuous collaborations with local school districts to ensure programs are realistically preparing future school leaders for the realities of contemporary schools.

In addition to the Illinois Standards for School Leaders and ELCC Standards, the committee considered other sources of school leadership development (ISLLC standards; Southern Regional Education Board, SREB; Mid Continent Resource for Education and Learning, MCREL; National Association for Elementary School Principals, NAESP; summary of a focus group with the Illinois Principals Association; Chicago Public Schools Competencies for Principals; and Leithwood et al.) to establish an inclusive definition of competencies necessary for principals leading contemporary Illinois schools. Compiling the lists of competencies, the committee found the Illinois Standards for School Leaders, similar to ELCC standards, encompassed all competencies with the exception of three: a) principal as change agent (SREB, NAESP, IPA focus group, CPS); b) principal balancing the educational needs of students with their personal, emotional, and developmental needs (MCREL, NAESP, IPA focus group); and, c) principals managing their own professional development and growth (SREB, NAESP, CPS).

While one could argue that these three might fit into existing Illinois Standards for School Leaders (or ELCC standards), the group believed these three competencies required explicit attention in all Illinois principal preparation programs. The conclusions of the committee were that, with the exception of these three competencies (principal as change agent; principal balancing the educational needs of students with their personal, emotional, and developmental needs; and, principals managing their own professional development and growth), the Illinois Standards for School Leaders provided a clear direction for educational administration programs that was grounded in other work on the subject. University programs, however, should attend to the incorporation of these three additional competencies in the preparation of principals.

From the analysis of standards and current literature, the committee recommended aspiring administrators receive explicit instruction and experiences to support development as change agents. Though recognized as an important skill in the research, Illinois Standards for School Leaders are not explicit about the role of the principal as change agent who actively challenges the status quo to serve the needs of all students (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Therefore, attention to these complex sets of knowledge, skills, and dispositions required attention. Levine's study (2005) found the areas in which principals felt least prepared included: to work in diverse school environments (41%); to work with differing socioeconomic groups (41%); and, to educate them better on multi-ethnic/racial populations (39%). While there are Illinois graduate programs seeking to address understanding of diverse populations and tensions created by current accountability through No Child Left Behind, there is still a great deal of work for preparation programs to provide graduate students with the skills to "trouble bureaucracies" (Blackmore, 1999) in order to create positive learning environments for all students and their families.

Collaborations between educational administration faculty, practitioners, and other faculty could provide opportunities to learn methods to develop

...social change agents who are keenly aware of inequities in society and possess the knowledge, skills, and will to make a difference in the lives of others. ...developing graduates of programs to be motivated by the moral purpose of their work and to regard the policies and rules of organizations to exist to serve the needs of students and families. (Tripses, Hatfield, & Risen, 2005)

Such students would be encouraged "to hold visions that are not in the social mainstream . . . it is exactly that courage to take a stand for one's vision that distinguishes people of high levels of personal mastery" (Senge, 1990). Graduates would become credible school leaders through multiple opportunities in the programs to develop congruence between values and behavior (Covey, 1990; Goldman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002) and to have the interpersonal, managerial, and leadership skills that result in schools that are simultaneously efficient and responsive learning communities.

There is another consideration closely related to the previous two: it involves creating the graduate students' capacities to understand and attend to the social, emotional, and physical development of students. Current educational reform emphasizes raising test scores and other standardized outcomes frequently to the exclusion of other aspects of student development (Eisner, 2005). Guiding graduate students to understand tensions involved in current accountability based solely upon student achievement against other realities exacerbated by increasing diversity is a clear responsibility for principal preparation programs.

Graduate programs must attend to developing future school leaders who take responsibility for their own professional development and growth. Barth (1990) stated that leaders must first of all attend to their own learning development. He provided the analogy of the familiar safety talk at the beginning of all flights. In the event of an emergency, adults responsible for children should first attach their own oxygen before attending to the needs of their child. Similarly, competent future school leaders must attend first to their own learning needs. The committee contended that lifelong professional learning is a critical disposition that should be a thread throughout course content in all programs.

School practitioners on the committee rightly insisted that school improvement efforts based on best practice in schools be a clear priority for all required courses. There are two important issues here for preparation programs. First is the necessity to ensure graduate students receive extensive experience on the technical aspects of school improvement through emphasis on analysis, understanding, and utilization of data. The second issue revolves around teaching students connections between school improvement (based upon data analysis) and all aspects of the work of a principal. For instance, graduate programs should emphasize connections between school improvement and teacher evaluation, teacher professional development, budget, just to name a few areas.

The final recommendation of the committee related to program design centered on development of program accountability processes: issues related to differences between external accountability (NCATE in Illinois) and program evaluations for non-NCATE accredited institutions. The committee recommended a systemic program evaluation process throughout the state to maintain focus on the development of strong school leaders. Included in program evaluation were advisory boards made up of practitioners, university representatives, and students to assess the program, the performance, and satisfaction of graduates.

Well-designed programs include extensive clinical activities and field-based mentored internships that integrate theory and practice and progressively develop administrative competencies through a range of practical experiences (Capasso & Daresh, 2001; Hale & Moorman, 2003). ELCC standards include a separate standard on the internship that is not found in the Illinois Standards for School Leaders. While standards are only the beginning of the development of coherent program design, review of the ELCC standard 7 provides a clear foundation for internships.

The ELCC Standard 7 reads as follows: "the internship provides significant opportunities for candidates to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified in Standards 1–6 through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively by the institution and school district personnel for graduate credit." According to it, the internship shall be: (a) substantial (interns should be involved in experiences that increase over time in amount, complexity, and relation to the job); (b) sustained (interns should be involved in experiences throughout the entire period of their preparation); (c) standards-based (experiences should be based on local and national standards); (d) held in real settings (interns should experience a wide-range of activities applicable to the principalship; and, (e) planned and guided cooperatively (experiences should be planned and executed by the individual, the site supervisor, and institution personnel to assure that the candidate is gaining a valuable experience during the internship) (ELCC Standards for School Leaders).

Internship designers should carefully consider the extent to which their program is "real-world" and connected to the realities of school accountability (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005; Levine, 2005), as well as the expectation that students actually lead as opposed to attending or observing school improvement initiatives. Careful attention to the roles that students play in their internship is critical—and students should be expected to move quickly from observing and participating to leading.

Key assessments for the internship should be carefully designed using best practice in assessments that includes explicit definitions of who will use the assessment information, what is to be assessed, mean of assessment, what constitutes acceptable evidence, and accuracy (Stiggins, 2005). Effective performance assessments

should be based upon clearly defined goals developed by graduate students under the umbrella of the internship syllabus. Goals should be based upon individual student learning needs. Guidelines for the development of criteria for authoring internship goals (Fulmer, Muth, & Reiter, 2004) are as follows:

1. Goals must be relevant to the context of a student's clinical-practice environment, while meeting program standards (and/or state standards).
2. Goals must be written to provide service to the school site rather than simply to meet the needs of the student practitioner. Those needs are met when they successfully complete the goals and tasks they author.
3. Goals must provide an appropriate mix of demanding leadership and management experience with less demanding observation experiences.
4. Goals must provide challenging assignments that require the development of skills that are relatively new to the student and experiences that cause the students to move outside of a personal comfort zone. Students are not permitted to use their typical job functions as clinical-practice activities. (p. 195)

Based upon student-developed goals, graduate students (with support from university supervisors) develop acceptable evidence that they have accomplished the goals. Learning experiences are defined to a large extent by the goals and evidence of assessment designed by graduate students under the support and direction of university faculty.

Other critical learning experiences ideally involve regularly scheduled seminars where groups of interns meet with university supervisors to talk about issues and reflect upon their experiences. Continuing in their role as designers, university intern supervisors might design specific problem solving case studies (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). There is ample evidence that the problem solving expertise of administrators can be developed through regular and purposeful attention.

Based upon these considerations of the internship, the committee recommendations focused upon creation of internships designed to provide authentic experiences for future school leaders. The first recommendation was to embed internship/clinical experiences throughout the graduate program in ways that provide future school leaders opportunities in multiple settings to first observe recognized school leaders early in the program and later on lead school activities under the support of an engaged mentor. For example, program design ensures the graduate students exposure and experiences in diverse school settings as well as developmentally appropriate leadership development. Other considerations include making connections for students between their internship work and school improvement and balance between management and adaptive leadership related to the development of change agency.

The preferred model would provide a one-week per semester internship experience (four full-time weeks of internship over a candidate's preparation program) for principal candidates. This model of internship experience would be tied to the coursework, related to school improvement efforts in the school, and focused on leadership development of the graduate student. For example, when taking a course on human and fiscal resources, students engaged in a week-long internship would analyze ways personnel are used in the building, or conduct a study of time on task in conjunction with instructional resource allocations. Performance outcomes must provide benefit both to the student and the school. The recommendation sought funding for districts and higher education programs for collaborative efforts to organize and coordinate this initiative, as well as substitute teachers for the week (approximately \$600 per week multiplied by 4 times throughout a preparation program) that the aspiring principal is out of his or her classroom.

The mentor was deemed as a critical element of the internship. Several models were considered by the committee including an application process for mentors to ensure qualifications as a master principal and working through superintendent organizations to support principals in their roles as mentors. The intention of the committee was to assure that mentors understood the value of the internship experience, have themselves achieved a high level of competency as a school leader, and finally were dedicated to help the principal acquire the needed instructional and management skills.

In order to develop graduate student capacity to successfully lead schools in diverse setting, the committee recommended a statewide structure that allows for internship experiences in multiple settings including those outside their home districts. By conducting internship experiences on a district or regional basis—e.g., seeking mentors within the region rather than within the school—the candidate can be assured a much richer internship

experience. Collaboration or coordination of such experiences could include local superintendents or regional superintendents.

Admission and Retention of Graduate Students and Faculty Considerations

Levine's study (2005) claimed low admission standards for education administration programs, reporting the perception that education administration programs admit all students who apply and in some cases lower admission standards to assure that all seats in the program are filled. Levine also claimed that the motivation driving many students who obtain administrator certificates has more to do with earning credits and obtaining salary increases than with furthering one's education. The committee chose to focus not on admission standards but rather on the alignment between admission criteria and standards that predict individuals qualified with the skills needed to be instructional leaders, as well as the interest to pursue careers in the field. Focused on this premise, the committee recommended the following regarding the admission of aspiring principal candidates:

First, entrance into preparation programs should be based upon multiple requirements and sources of information about candidates, including undergraduate GPA, graduate admission exams, and letters of recommendation, but also on results of other assessment instruments that measure a candidate's personal attributes and dispositions for the position.

Measurement of progress of aspiring administrators at transition gates throughout the program: for instance at entry, after completion of a prescribed number of courses, upon beginning the internship, and upon certification. The purpose of such a process would be to provide guidance and support to students as needed. This model is similar to ones used by many teacher preparation programs and supports the development of dispositions required for NCATE accredited programs.

Levine's study (2005) offered several criticisms of education administration faculty, including a lack of balance between adjunct and full-time faculty and a disconnect between what is taught in the academic classroom and what really occurs in the field. Based upon the dilemma posed by Levine (2005), departments that hire too many adjunct faculty (who might lack the scholarly knowledge of the field) and full-time faculty (who might not have experience in the field), the committee recommended a balance of faculty with both practical and theoretical knowledge and skills about school leadership.

In order to maintain a clear connection between theory and practice, the committee recommended state funds to provide voluntary ongoing professional development administered by organizations such as the Illinois Council of Professors of Education Administration (ICPEA). ICPEA represents both private and public colleges of education and collaborates on an on-going basis with organizations such as the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Boards. Collaborations with practitioner-based organizations was considered evidence that professional development pieces offered through ICPEA would be linked to current issues in the field.

Systemic Issues

Early on, the committee struggled with dilemmas that involved statewide systemic issues. Fueled in part by the Levine report (2005), members of the committee devoted considerable time and energy defining the problem, determining who was accountable, and finally moving toward solutions. Coming from various perspectives of school leadership, members of the group worked together to share what was learned together with the intention of influencing to some extent state level policies and strategies in ways that focused on both "capacity building and more effective accountability" (Fullan, 2005, p. 86).

Related to issues of standards in educational administration programs is defining the difference between compliance programs that complete necessary work to align program documents with standards and those purposeful programs that regard alignment of course work to standards as only the first step. The NCATE accreditation process, of which ELCC is a part, appears to provide some direction for programs seeking to become purposeful. Since the 2002 adoption of the ELCC standards, NCATE accreditation has moved from a process of providing evidence of curriculum *coverage* to providing evidence of *student mastery* through performance assessments. Identifying differences between programs that embrace this shift and programs not providing evidence of student performance is a significant part of the work of this committee. Identification of characteristics

of programs that move beyond simple compliance for state recognition to the creation and ongoing development of programs that develop strong instructional leaders was frequently sought. Provided here are preliminary characteristics of such programs based on conversations of the committee. The committee recognized that strong programs exist within and outside of accreditation processes. The programs envisioned by the committee:

1. Use accreditation requirements based upon performance assessments of work of principals to develop the program.
2. Develop and maintain strong collaborations with local school districts to establish criteria for preparation of principals. Existing models for such collaborations include advisory boards, large district to university collaborations, and regional collaborations that involve state regional superintendents. The intent of the committee was to encourage such collaborations to result in strengthening of principal preparation programs.
3. Utilize a concept of real work of principals (upon which performance assessments are developed) that is based upon collaborations with local school administrators as well as thorough understanding of leadership and organizational theories of schools.
4. Have a clear understanding of performance assessments for graduate students as well as program evaluation.

State support for school leadership development and sustainability was sought primarily through funding to enable graduate students to engage in four weeklong internship experiences during their programs. While recognizing fiscal constraints, the committee also believed that development of strong school leaders required commitment on the part of all stakeholders including legislators.

Collaboration was a recurring theme throughout the work of the committee. The development of coherent collaborations focused on common goals is quite complex. The committee was comprised of school leaders serving in various roles throughout the state. Recommendations for collaboration were developed with a clear understanding by members of the committee that much work is yet to be done to create sustainable improvements for school leadership (Fullan, 2005).

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Starting from a rather ambitious charge to “develop a framework of elements of effective university administrator preparation programs” the committee recommended changes in the Illinois Standards for School Leaders to explicitly include the principal as change agent, the principal as lifelong professional learner, and the principal as change agent who sees beyond accountability based solely on test scores to include the social, emotional, and physical well being of students and their families. As a driving factor in all coursework, school improvement must be incorporated into all preparation of principals.

Recommendations for the internship involved incorporating in some way ELCC Standard 7, which explicitly defines the internship as substantial, sustained, standards-based, in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively, and acquiring university credit. Other recommendations for the internship gleaned research and experiences from members of the committee included internship experiences embedded throughout graduate programs in multiple settings. Such experiences would progressively require students to first observe exemplary school leaders, moving quickly on to participation and finally leadership in school improvement endeavors. The preferred model would be one week per semester (4 full-time weeks of internship experiences under the guidance of the mentor) to be funded by the state. The costs would be primarily to pay for substitutes during the four weeks. The committee recognized the need for additional attention to the role played by mentors in the internship process.

The committee noted a need to reform the current initial and renewal accreditation processes in the state. While this recommendation came from committee deliberations, the committee did not specifically address how such changes might be implemented.

Finally, in response to Levine, the committee recommended that principal preparation programs employ multiple admission criteria with the purpose of identifying leadership potential in graduate students, faculty composition designed to achieve a balance between theory and practice, and state funds for professional development for university faculty.

LESSONS LEARNED BY A PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Serving as co-chair of this committee was extraordinarily complex, full of frustration and opportunity. I am reminded of the fable about the blind men and the elephant—each describing a very different aspect of the elephant and none capable of comprehending an elephant. Each member of the group brought experience, wisdom, and opinions to the table. Like many groups similarly convened to address a crisis of some sort, our group struggled to identify the problem, to understand existing conditions that support and detract from school leadership, and finally to develop coherent recommendations for improvement. As happens with these kinds of committees and their resulting reports, the findings may or may not result in policy changes.

Leading a group “convened by Levine” to some extent, I recognized that reactions of members of the committee varied. Generally, the school practitioners were unaware of the report but were willing to respond to issues raised by Levine based on their experiences. Higher education faculty members were defensive and prepared to defend their particular program. Others on the committee believed the Levine report rightly established accountability for failing school leadership on university preparation programs. Learning together about the other pieces of the Levine elephant was challenging and rewarding. I believe all members of the committee learned from the experience.

Time will tell whether or not the collective wisdom of the committee results in any meaningful change in principal preparation programs throughout the state. The opportunities afforded me in this process are real. I bring back to my principal preparation program all that I have learned from practitioners and faculty alike. I have a renewed sense of commitment to learn with other faculty throughout the state to improve our programs. As always, I learned a great deal from other members of the committee about administrative practice, preparation programs, and leadership demonstrated by others through the committee process. And finally, I have a clearer picture of this elephant called stronger school leadership.

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Defining Moments: The Transformative Potential of Professional Learning Communities

Virginia Doolittle and Ellen Trombetta

INTRODUCTION

Leadership preparation has seen the coming and going of multiple innovations in the field during its brief 100 year history. Moving between myriad management strategies and discussions about the potential benefits of cohorts, we continue to explore, examine, and refine our theories, conceptual frameworks and strategies for implementing curriculum and program revisions hoping to extend our capacity for critique by probing the accuracy of the truths we proclaim. In the process, we attempt to clarify what works and what doesn't.

Subject to multiple and harsh critiques over the years with the most recent invective springing from critic Arthur Levine (2005), Levine's call for higher standards for schools and leadership preparation programs reiterates past critiques as does his demand for evaluating programs and then closing those that fail to measure up. So, once again, we find ourselves at a major juncture confronted with the central and recurring question: Are we on the wrong road?

A joint UCEA, TEA, and NCATE response (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005) points out, however, that Levine's diatribe ignores current efforts in the field aimed at bringing about complex changes in leadership preparation. Further, they point out that accrediting agencies including the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), whose member organizations include the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), have crafted rigorous structures for administrative licensure. Lastly, several states and professional organizations have begun to elaborate on these standards. These organizations include the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). Perhaps, the clearest agreement about the future direction of educational administrations can be found among the 73 doctoral granting member institutions of UCEA who adopted the following 11 standards for leadership preparation:

- Identify, develop, and promote relevant knowledge for the field
- Involve a critical mass of full-time leadership faculty members
- Collaborate with practitioners and other stakeholders in candidate selection, program planning, teaching, and field internships
- Collaborate with scholars, practitioners and other stakeholders to inform program content, promote diversity, and develop sites for clinical practice and applied research
- Are conceptually coherent
- Engage in on-going programmatic evaluation and enhancement
- Include concentrated periods of study and supervised clinical practices in diverse settings
- Are characterized by systematic recruitment and admission plans

- Maintain systematic efforts to assist students in placement and career advancement
- Have faculty participate in professional development programs in cooperation with professional associations
- Offer regular professional development for faculty.

This framework for improving preparation programs calls for modifications to curriculum, instruction, and the epistemological basis of leadership preparation. Unfortunately, the struggles associated with implementing such systemic, or second-order, changes remains obscure and largely unexamined in practice, however.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

During the first segment of this multi-phase action research study (see Doolittle, Stanwood, & Simmerman, in press), the authors examined implementing professional learning communities as a “best-practice” instructional strategy for achieving revised program-learning outcomes. Study outcomes support the notion of professional learning communities as a strategy for extending student learning and helping students transfer theory into practice.

During Phase II of the study, this mid-Atlantic state adopted a new administrative licensure code. The new code reflects the standards endorsed by ELCC and the ISLLC standards and requires aspiring school leaders to successfully complete the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). Implementation of the revised program identified several challenges inherent in implementing standards-based reform. After adopting a conceptual framework marrying professional learning communities with a thematic integrated curriculum, faculty determined that students and colleagues were not necessarily ready for, or lacked the necessary skills for successfully navigating the program’s constructivist-based revisions. Consequently, the researchers posit that moving from a banking model of instruction dominated by lectures as the primary instructional method to a program with multiple instructional strategies requires faculty to examine and challenge their personal and professional norms and necessitates ongoing participation in the program development and implementation process.

DEFINING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

John Dewey (1938) envisioned schools as learning communities. Similar notions, such as centers of inquiry (Schaefer, 1967), learning academies (Sparks, 1994), and learning enriched?? (Rosenholtz, 1991) also appear in the literature. In practice, the concept implies that learners and their learning are reflected in the core technology of schools: teaching and learning. With this established as the priority for any and all future actions, instruction then move from a transmission or banking model (Friere, 1970) to a constructivist approach to learning where teachers become responsible for establishing appropriate learning conditions rather than simply communicating knowledge represented by disparate facts and theories. Mental models (Senge, 1990) shift to student as learner, thinker, and doer with teachers and administrators modeling similar efforts. By assuming the responsibility for their own learning and the need to master and make sense of their world, motivation moves from extrinsic to intrinsic (Schaefer, 1967). Parents and community members become partners as they gain better understanding of how learning occurs.

A second key to successful learning communities, reflective decision-making relies on a core of strong subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge base; an orientation toward regular use of informed inquiry; regular and on-going individual, learner, and program assessment; openness to critique and diverse views; and a commitment to lifelong learning (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). Moreover, learning communities require teachers to think systematically, become learners, and engage in reflective decision-making. Critical inquiry underpins learning community efforts focused on continuous improvement (Dewey, 1938; Senge, 1990). Thus, practitioners and learning partners strive to transform teaching practices to become more inclusive, collaborative, and responsible to the diverse cultures served by public schools. In sum, learning communities allow practitioners to engage in a collaborative approach to inquiry, learning, and problem solving built on a thorough understanding and deep and on-going commitment to the educational process through double-loop learning (Fullan, 2001; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993).

Learning communities also denote a high level of program coherence where curriculum, instruction, and

technology inform the assessment and evaluation process (Koppich & Knapp, 1998) and, subsequently, become a lens for organizing learning experiences (Dottin, 2001). Learning goals are solidly grounded in research and the profession's multiple knowledge bases (Gideonse, 1992) through thematically-based programming (Arends & Winitzky, 1996) with practitioners and partners facilitating the integration of program elements (Galluzzo & Pankratz, 1990). In practice, this strategy provides a focus for assessing efforts against a vision of what ought to be, and, in the process, attempts to build individual and group capacity.

On the other hand, Margaret Basom and Diane Yerkes (2004) contend that educational leadership departments often fail to deliver on their promises of coherent instruction where "learning communities are laboratories for experiencing transformational leadership and for forming the dispositions,?? knowledge, and performance skills necessary for transformational leadership" (Norris, Barnett, Basom, & Yerkes, 2002, p. 10). Rusch & Basom (1999) similarly assert that faculty members frequently espouse the value of teaching while acting as independent contractors, delivering course content in separate modules.

PROGRAM MODIFICAITONS

The revised program modified the five entry-level courses and better-aligned course content with the program's new learner outcomes. More specifically, the revisions provided for the inclusion of case studies, scenarios, and expanded time for engaging in dialogue in small and large group settings. Course assignments and classroom activities were organized around the ISLLC standards and more responsibilities for acquiring course competencies were shifted to students through cooperative learning, trust-building, educational platforms, and social interaction. Foundations for creating a university-field network comprised of local administrators, program graduates, and university partners from the Professional Development Schools Network (PDS) were also set in motion.

During Phase II courses, students are required to complete an additional 25 credit hour field experience beyond the regular course requirements (See Appendix A—Law and Ethics for School Leadership, School Finance and Records, Instructional Leadership and Supervision, Change for School Improvement, and Building Organizational Capacity). These field activities are intended to be part of a unifying experience integrating and operationalizing the core elements into "the organic experience of school leadership...as it should be" (Moorman, Critical Friends Review, September 2005).

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The department requires both tenured and non-tenured faculty to examine end-of-semester student course evaluations for the purpose of improving instruction. In addition, department members have adopted the practice of requiring course learning reflections as a final assignment in all courses. The learning reflection assignment requires students to "metacognate," that is, to think about their thinking and learning during the semester. Adopted, in part, because they provide an appropriate source of thick rich data, learning reflections also allow course instructors to make more meaningful connections to their teaching because students elaborate on their learning. The Department believes that learning reflections represent an important breakthrough in the process of continuous improvement and allows them to triangulate insights gleaned from student course evaluations, course products, with their intended learner outcomes. Inviting students to be candid, thoughtful, and consider how they have contributed to helping others learn, they are asked to examine how their thinking about their workplace has changed, how they understand and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions embedded in the six ISLLC standards and, finally, how they operationalize these competencies in their workplace. Cautioned to avoid simply describing the syllabus, this 4–6 page assignment is ungraded, but required for passing the course.

METHOD

Data analysis parallels course rubrics and utilizes the rigorous process of systematic inquiry advocated by Kemmis and McTaggart (1982). All student products produced during the semester were examined for compliance with course assignments. Rubrics guided the instructor's process for grading products. Student course

evaluations and data gleaned from learning reflections were coded using the open and axial techniques developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and then grouped into categories. Categories were subsequently collapsed into themes for further analysis. Selective coding was accomplished by re-reading course evaluations, student learning reflections, and student course products.

FINDINGS

The cyclical action research reported here centers on an entry-level course in the program (Educational Organizations and Leadership) and surfaces evidence of student learning outcomes mirroring transformational student learning (Norris, 2004). Students described how they realized that each had been “some sort of leader” during their early personal and professional lives and “concluded that they could do the job [of being a leader or administrator],” revealing an increased understanding about the personal values and beliefs that influence their emerging practice of leadership.

Students reported that the focus on modeling professional learning communities created a safe learning environment and that the integrated problem-based learning curriculum built sufficient confidence so that students tested new leadership behaviors in their professional context prior to the end of the course. Opportunities to acquire and polish reflective skills also led them to see their context in a different light along with insights illuminating how politics frequently shaped a learning environment. Acquiring reflective led them to glean specific “ideas for enacting their own leadership.” Many students reported that this discovery helped translate their espoused commitment to seek administrative licensure into “seeking leadership positions.” A student wrote:

I never understood the different frames that come into play, especially the political frame. I just believed that politics had no place in school. Realizing how different people think differently and have different values also helps me to understand the politics of a school better. This class has provided me with the knowledge of how to be better aware of people around me, and how they fit into the dynamics of the school as a whole. I think I will need to continue to push myself to take a more active leadership role wherever I am. (Elementary Teacher)

Consistent with the literature on adult learning, student course evaluations specifically report a preference for a collaborative constructivist-learning environment. However, almost all students initially expressed distrust of group projects recounting past experiences where they believe learning to be marginal, at best, and noted, instead, that:

I have learned that I should not judge a class by its description alone. By this I mean, your class has provided me with much more than the description. It has taught me that learning can be fun and entertaining. There are many ways in which individual can assess their leadership skills and beliefs. The leadership platform made me look at myself and why I do things the way I do. It also made me appreciate people and the situations in my life that made me who I am today. I know that as I go through my life there will be many more people that influence my leadership style and skills. In acknowledging this I will look more closely at how individual people and organizations accomplish needed change. I hope to learn through their struggles and accomplishments to be a better leader. (High School Guidance Counselor)

Related to this data was evidence of students’ affinity for case studies and other instructional strategies. Students clearly preferred the interactive nature of the course. One aspiring school psychologist stated: “The learning community presentation that we completed on school choice was the most collaborative group project that I have ever been a part of. I learned a lot about collaboration and brainstorming . . . I have learned about leadership.” Another classroom teacher remarked:

Other parts of the course that I do appreciate were the sample vignettes and the larger case study we did towards the end. These were really my first experiences with probing administrative questions. Although they were hypothetical situations, they did enable me to place myself in an administrative role. They encouraged me to think differently about situations I may have encountered before. Whenever I am asked to re-evaluate a familiar situation from another viewpoint, I always gain a better perspective of the whole picture. (Elementary Teacher)

Despite the students' praise, the course instructor noted that very few students had the know-how for working in groups. Absent previous experience in collaborative learning, they often struggled to find their voice or, in some cases, to temper it. A learning consultant reflected:

As the classes progressed, I continued to be impressed with the insights and commitment of the other members of the class, eliminating any apprehension I held of irrelevant discussion or the possibility of a climate of discontent that has existed in prior graduate courses that I have been a part of. . . The atmosphere of cooperation through group exercises and discussion became almost immediately clear. The purposeful structuring of the class as "professionals" within a learning community reflected the ideal of working in such a manner within the schools. I began to feel that we, as students, were a powerful microcosm of strength and change and that the techniques of collaboration could be transferred into our own daily practices as educational leaders. (Elementary Learning Consultant)

As students practiced case studies, their lack of content knowledge, especially about change, became apparent. For example, gaps became obvious as students attempted to compete a case study adapted from the practice exercises for the School Leaders Licensure Consortia (SLLC). The case study selected for the course focused on applying concepts related to staff development and collaboration. Examining the small group solutions developed during class, it was clear that solutions generated by students were undeveloped and "staff development didn't even seem to be on their radar." Equally important was the observation that while their plans contained some elements of a viable solution, students reported having minimal exposure to effective staff development or opportunities for understanding how budgetary or contractual structures might constrain implementation. Third, they lacked adequate skills for enacting transformational leadership, thereby truncating their solutions. Instead, solutions tended to stay within the boundaries of the traditional administrative practices observed in their professional workplace.

Likewise, faculty expressed some surprise that students' performance in these problem-based learning activities seemed so limited. Questioning whether "they had taught it, but students hadn't learned it," prompted discussions about whether students had acquired adequate strategies for defining problems or, simply, lacked sufficient procedural knowledge for solving complex dilemmas. Faculty pondered whether "staff development was really on their radar," and whether their school experiences were so narrow that their problem-solving ability limited their ability to envision realistic and doable solutions.

DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that we defend our work from the current swarm of critics, we must also concede that there is some merit to their claims. Considering our reluctance as a profession to engage in the deep thinking required for second-order change, we suspect that it may not be so easy to corroborate assertions proclaiming success when learner outcomes are more carefully scrutinized by licensing and accreditation agencies. We describe below why this may be so.

Historically, our program relied heavily on lecture as the primary strategy for instruction. Not only did this discourage meaningful dialogue among students, it left them wondering what they must know and do in order to become successful school leaders. Faculty also worked in isolation, rarely taking the time to learn what skills others were teaching in their courses. On the other hand, the potential embedded in professional learning communities suggests another outcome:

Coming into this class, Organization and Leadership, I was not expecting much. Many summer courses have bored me to tears. Most times in these classes the professors were giving assignments to just occupy time. These professors did not want to be in class, as much as I did not want to be there either. This course has taught me more than I could have ever imagined possible. . . I not only learned about leadership, I learned about human connections, and about intrinsic power and courage that people hold within them. This course and the people here . . . have been my change and my little unexpected blessing. (High School Science Teacher)

Without engaging in careful monitoring of our teaching practices and carefully examining course products for evidence of students' acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for becoming effective school

leaders, we may miss what they know and are able to do and, ultimately, what will transfer into the workplace. Moreover, we may over-rely on the expectation that critical competencies were, in fact, developed or mastered pre-requisite course competencies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

It was obvious during the study that while student learning was substantially improved with the revised curriculum, the absence of more specific connections and scaffolds to other courses presented substantial instructional challenges. Review of the spring and summer data predictably surfaced gaps in students' learning, emphasizing the importance of having both multiple instructional strategies and a coherent program structure. John Glaser (2005) artfully described this coherence as "A line of professional dancers all doing the same steps in unison, like the Radio City Rockettes or those in *Riverdance*". (p. 10) This depends on several factors, including a "problem solving community" (p. 13) with an observable pattern of thinking and program alignment. Courses are linked by a common purpose and instructors share beliefs about what's important to know and do.

These findings highlight another critical prerequisite for improving preparation programs: the importance of faculty collectively examining and operationalizing systemic modifications to the curriculum and its delivery. If modifying a single course is insufficient for promoting candidates' capacity to respond to the complex demands of leading schools, then faculty must commit to the tedious work of creating overall coherence by learning and planning together. Arguably, a new generation of school leaders is far more likely to emerge through coordinated pedagogical efforts aligned against a comprehensive set of standards (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005) rather than with the first-order changes characterizing the field's response to earlier critics.

Secondly, effective leadership develops and sustains an organizational structure that focuses attention on engaging in a challenging teaching practice and work-related results. Turning our awareness to creating a supportive environment for improving student achievement (Elmore, 2005), we must also keep in mind that teachers need encouragement, access, time, and support. The creation of such structures, including support for collaboration, coaching, extensive professional development, and sufficient planning time, helps leaders vanquish the privacy of practice and, thereby, assists teachers in acquiring the necessary skills and competencies for supporting teaching and learning. In our view, this requires expertise in both management and leadership.

Professional learning communities help promote intentional learning of complex new practices. We believe that it is our responsibility to model appropriate skills for our students. In turn, a modified student-faculty relationship supplants the familiar bureaucratic connection (Elmore, 2000) with relationship-building contributing to a sense of community and the creation of a safe, caring learning environment (Murphy, 2005). Here, stakeholders come to perceive themselves as participants in a web-like network of reciprocal professional relations (Elmore, 2005) with administrators leading from personal values. School leaders who adopt a caring, inclusive, reflective, innovative stance toward teaching and learning, while recognizing that the factors promoting student achievement and improvement in a professional learning community embody reciprocity and moral commitment (Elmore, 2005; 2000; Murphy, 2005; Sergiovanni, 1996), have a better chance for improving student performance.

SUMMARY

This study provides evidence that students preferred participating in a professional learning community whose instructional strategies included, but were not limited to: collaborative teaching, self discovery or self assessment instruments, educational platforms, journals, portfolios, problem-based learning, trust-building activities, student voice/engagement, cooperative learning activities, and reflection over traditional program structures and instructional strategies. Moreover, these strategies promoted reflectivity in their professional practice and subsequent decision to seek licensure as an administrator.

Findings point to the need for leadership preparation programs to engage in the more complex and tedious work of overhauling entire curriculums and their instructional delivery systems. Program modifications must be comprehensive and cohere around a conceptual framework directed at improving the teaching and learning process while facilitating the translation of theory into practice. As professionals we must understand that program coherence depends on both the creation of a professional learning community as well as the scaffolding

and articulation of individual courses into a coherent curriculum.

In sum, a professional learning community portrays a wider, collective network of reciprocal relationships orchestrated for student success, yet flexible enough to integrate new leadership paradigms, guiding an improved personalized learning community where dispositions underpin practice (Elmore, 2005; ISSLC, 2003; Leithwood & Lewis, 2005; Murphy, 2005). Such an educational leadership framework represents a depersonalized praxis incongruent with current quality, large-scale education leadership research. So then, if these are the competencies that graduates of leadership preparation programs must acquire, we must first master them ourselves.

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APPENDIX A

Phase 1—Required Core Courses

Foundations of Educational Policymaking	3
Fundamentals of Curriculum Development	3
Action Research in Education	3
Technology for School Leadership	3
Educational Organizations & Leadership	3

Phase 2—Professional Courses

Law & Ethics for School Leadership	3
School finance and Records	3
Instructional Leadership & Supervision	3
Change for School Improvement	3
Building Organizational Capacity	3

Coursework includes course-embedded field experience components of approximately 150 clock hours

Phase 3—practicum/Seminar

Practicum/Seminar in Administration & Supervision	3
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The Practicum/Seminar course includes a one-semester 150 clock hour clinical experience under the guidance of a university supervisor and field mentor.

Ethics in Principal Preparation Programs: A Move Towards Best Practice

Stacey Edmonson and Alice Fisher

Administrative leaders who are ethical and able to make ethical decisions are critical to the future of education. Recent research and survey data in the field demonstrate an overwhelming shortcoming in ethical awareness on the part of educational leaders (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Czaja & Lowe, 2000). Because schools are the backbone of society, ethical leadership on today's campuses is critical, particularly in light of a changing society that appears more and more to devalue ethical behavior (Doggett, 1988); in fact, Starratt (2003) pointed out "that a marked increase in the breakdown of ethical behavior in both the home and in public life over the past 30 years has occurred" (p.4).

An understanding of ethics and moral behavior is imperative for current school leaders who must make a number of important decisions on a daily basis (Campbell, 1997). In fact, the ability to use moral reasoning in order to make ethical decisions has even been found to have a direct correlation to success as a principal (Campbell, 1997; Greenfield, 1999). As Boleman and Deal (2001) explained, a foundation of ethics and integrity "are at the heart of the most successful leadership" (p.42). Furthermore, Starratt explained that

Many practicing administrators want to do the right thing in their leadership endeavors, but many of them have not had an opportunity to learn the analytical perspectives (the ethics of moral leadership) that would enable them to embrace a moral dimension of leadership that they are in fact searching for. (p. 134)

Thus, one of the most important gaps in the current training of educational leaders is that of ethics. Previously, ethics has received little attention from professional organizations and even less attention in educator preparation programs. Leaders in education have very little, if any, training or processing in ethics and ethical behavior (Beck & Murphy, 1994). With increasing levels of accountability and complexity for school administrators, these gaps in ethics training must be addressed. Additionally, few programs address personal behavior that is the basis for demonstrating ethical leadership. The need for ethical administrators is reaching pervasive and critical dimensions. The lack of ethical administrators in part demonstrates a shortcoming on the part of educator preparation programs, including administrator preparation programs for principals and superintendents. Few educator preparation programs offer a curriculum that specifically addresses ethics (Beck & Murphy, 1994), and those programs that do offer coursework on ethics often do so at the doctoral level (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001), meaning that the master's degree courses, most often taken by aspiring principals and superintendents, offer no training in ethical decision-making.

Furthermore, very little administrative or educational theory focuses on ethics. In fact, ethics has held at best a minor role in administrative theory (Dunigan & Mac Pherson, 1992). It is unreasonable to expect students to learn about something that is not adequately addressed in theory or in the literature.

The value of ethics among our school leaders is evident through other avenues as well. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration includes a unit on values in its curriculum for training principals (Thompson, 1994), and the Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) devotes one of its six standards

entirely to the need for building ethical leaders (Czaja & Lowe, 2000). In addition, ethical standards and codes have been implemented by professional educator organizations for every level of school administrator. For example, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) publishes a code of ethics for its members, typically school superintendents. Likewise, the National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and National Middle School Association (NMSA) all publish ethical standards for their respective members. Ethical standards exist for every one of the major organizations representing every level of school administrators. Yet, little if any training takes place to ensure that the members are even aware of these standards, much less any sort of emphasis for members on incorporating these standards into their daily actions. Not only are administrators untrained in ethics by their administrator preparation programs, but they also receive little or no support for ethical behavior through their supporting organizations. These organizations should implement some type of awareness program among their respective members to ensure that all members are aware of and practicing these ethical standards (Czaja, Fisher, & Hutto, 2001). Ethical standards are in place, but they are not uniformly put into practice. This review uncovers a gap in supporting the development of ethical behaviors and practices for administrators. With this gap in mind, a study of preparation programs nationwide and their current practices was needed.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to survey educational leadership programs nationwide regarding the type and extent of ethics training they require of leadership students, and (2) to survey practicing principals (i.e., graduates of principal preparation programs) nationwide regarding their training in ethics and their familiarity with ethical standards.

Researcher-constructed surveys were mailed to a random sample of practicing principals (i.e., graduates of principal preparation programs) across the country. Likewise, an online format was used to survey professors of educational leadership in programs nationwide; professors from all universities represented in the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration were surveyed. The surveys were collected and their data synthesized in order to provide a more complete and thorough understanding of the current status of ethics among educational leaders.

Participants

Online surveys were sent to 300 faculty members of colleges and universities in the United States that offer a graduate program in educational leadership or administration. Due to the availability of resources through the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, the researchers included all university-based educational leadership programs in the sample for this study. The second sample consisted of 300 practicing principals across the United States; these names were obtained through the websites of state departments of education. Principals from all 50 states were included in the sample. Confidentiality of all participants was guaranteed, although participants did have the option of including their email address in the response in order to receive a copy of the results of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey instruments used in this study were developed with the assistance of an expert panel of educational leadership professors. The instruments were field-tested to establish content and construct validity. Questions on both instruments centered on awareness of ethical standards, curricula offered in ethics, assessment of ethics, and teaching modalities used with ethics. Items on the survey for principals differed from those on the faculty survey only in the phrasing of the questions; principal items referred to coursework previously taken, whereas faculty items referred to coursework currently being offered in the faculty member's program.

Results for each question on the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures. Qualitative data (responses to open-ended questions regarding best practices for ethics preparation) were also collected, coded, and analyzed to identify common themes and trends among the responses.

Table 1. Required course in ethics for principal preparation—faculty response (N=87).

Required course	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	24.1
No	65	74.7

RESULTS

Results from Faculty of Principal Preparation Programs

Online surveys were sent to 300 faculty members who teach in principal preparation programs across the country. From these surveys, 86 responses were received, for a response rate of 28.7 percent. The somewhat low response rate could be attributed to two possible causes: (1) not all faculty members are on contract during the time this survey was distributed (late summer) and (2) a destructive nationwide computer virus was rampant during the time this online survey was distributed.

Of the 87 faculty responses, 69% (n=60) came from universities that serve 10,000 or more students. This same percentage of professors responded that their respective programs offer a doctoral degree in educational leadership or administration. Responses were representative of assistant, associate, and full professors, including responses from eight department chairs and four deans. Programs from 32 states were represented in the responses. Almost 95 percent of the respondents indicated that their program offered a degree, certification, or credential for principals. However, only 21 of the 87 faculty members indicated that their principal certification program requires a course in ethics, meaning that 75 percent of programs in this study do not require any type of specific course for administrators in ethics. Table 1 displays these data. Two-thirds of these required courses may be taken at any time during a student's certification program; the remaining one-third of required ethics courses must be taken early in a student's program.

Three out of four programs implemented a specific set of ethical standards (as shown in Table 2). These standards were primarily developed by professional organizations for administrators, such as the American Association for School Administrators; a large number of programs also implemented ethical standards that are prescribed by a state certification agency. Other programs implement standards developed by the university preparation program or a university accrediting agency, such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). These results appear in Table 3.

Over 90 percent of faculty indicated that they include ethics training in their principal preparation program through avenues other than a specific course (see Table 4). The vast majority of this training occurred through class discussion, with a large number of programs also utilizing case studies to teach ethics. Lecture, field experiences, and simulated experiences were also used in ethics training; Table 5 illustrates these findings. The evaluation of ethics among principal certification students, however, is much less clear. A number of programs evaluate candidates using portfolios and field experience evaluations; personal interviews, and performance on a certification exam are also methods used to evaluate ethics. One obvious concern is the fact that more than one in every four programs does not evaluate its candidates' understanding of ethics or ethical decision-making in any way. Table 6 demonstrates these results.

In sum, slightly more than half of educational leadership professors felt that their program did an adequate job of preparing principal candidates in the area of ethics (Table 7). A number of faculty members suggested

Table 2. Program supports a set of ethical standards - faculty response (N=87).

Set of standards	Number	Percentage
Yes	65	74.7
No	21	24.1
No Response	2	2.2

Table 3. Source of program's ethical standards—faculty response (N=67).

Source of standards	Number	Percentage
Professional organization	26	29.8
University program	9	10.3
State certification agency	19	21.8
University accrediting agency	7	8.0
Other	6	6.8

Table 4. Ethics included in curriculum other than in specific course—faculty response (N=87).

Set of standards	Number	Percentage
Yes	79	90.8
No	7	8.0
No Response	1	1.2

Table 5. Delivery modes for ethics curriculum—faculty response (N=87, multiple responses allowed).

Type of Delivery	Number	Percentage
Lecture	48	55.8
Class discussion	72	83.7
Field experiences	43	50.0
Simulated experiences	35	40.6
Case studies	61	70.9
Other	14	16.2

Table 6. Evaluation of the ethics of principal certification candidates—faculty response (N=87, multiple responses allowed).

Type of Evaluation	Number	Percentage
Tests	9	10.4
Portfolios	44	51.1
Field experience evaluations	35	40.6
Performance on certification exam	17	19.7
Personal interviews	24	27.9
Other	7	8.1
Not evaluated	22	25.5

Table 7. Program's preparation in ethics is adequate—faculty response (N=87).

Program is adequate	Number	Percentage
Yes	49	56.3
No	35	40.2
No Response	3	

Table 8. Aware of ethical standards—current principal response (N=58).

Aware of standards	Number	Percentage
Yes	45	77.5
No	13	22.4

that the use of case studies, discussion of real scenarios in all classes, and development of an ethics course were all effective means of improving students' awareness of proficiency in ethics. As one professor stated,

Teaching about ethics is different than making a person "ethical." The latter has a lot to do with the development of character which is beyond training programs. But showing individuals varying ethical situations and responses is productive.

Results from Practicing Principals

Online surveys were sent to 300 current principals across the country; practicing principals from all 50 states were included in this sample. From these surveys, 58 responses were received, for a response rate of 19.3 percent. The low response rate could be attributed to two possible causes: (1) the survey was distributed just as the school year was starting, undoubtedly a very busy time for principals, and (2) a destructive nationwide computer virus was rampant during the time this online survey was distributed. Responses were representative of elementary and secondary principals from rural, suburban, and urban areas. Principals from 32 states were represented in the responses. Slightly more than half (52 percent) of the respondents had earned their principal certification more than ten years ago and had more than ten years of experience as an administrator. Forty percent of the respondents had four to ten years of experience, and the remaining nine percent had three or fewer years of experience and had earned their certification within the last three years. The responses were almost equal in gender, with 48 percent male respondents and 52 percent female.

More than three out of four principals were aware of professional ethics standards for school administrators (Table 8). These standards were primarily developed by professional organizations for administrators, such as the American Association for School Administrators; a large number of principals also knew of ethical standards that are prescribed by a state certification agency. Other principals recognized ethics standards developed by a university preparation program or a local education agency. These results appear in Table 9.

Seventy-two percent of responding principals said that ethics was included in their administrative certification coursework (Table 10). This training was primarily delivered through class discussions and case studies. Lecture and simulated experiences were also used frequently to teach ethics (Table 11). Sixty percent of the principals who responded felt that their preparation in ethics was adequate (Table 12). However, more than half of these same respondents have had no additional training in ethics in their current position (Table 13). Case studies and situational discussions were also suggested by principals as effective ways to improve ethics training in preparation programs. One principal suggested that:

Administrators are constantly making decisions regarding students' and teachers' futures. If we understand our position deals with ethical behavior, moral behavior needs to be modeled. Character counts!

Other principals noted modeling and mentoring as effective teaching strategies as well.

Table 9. Source of principals' ethical standards—current principal response (N=58).

Source of standards	Number	Percentage
Professional organization	26	44.8
University program	7	12.0
State certification agency	23	39.6
Local education agency	5	8.6
Other	1	1.7

Table 10. Ethics included in administrative certification coursework—current principal response (N=58).

Ethics addressed	Number	Percentage
Yes	42	72.4
No	16	27.5

Table 11. Delivery modes for ethics in principals' coursework—current principal response (N=58, multiple responses allowed).

Type of Delivery	Number	Percentage
Lecture	19	32.7
Class discussion	36	62.0
Simulated experiences	17	29.3
Case studies	31	53.4
Tests	3	5.1
Other	14	16.2

Table 12. Principal's preparation in ethics was adequate—current principal response (N=58).

Preparation was adequate	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	60.3
No	22	37.9
No Response	1	

Table 13. Ethics training in current position—current principal response (N=58).

Ethics training	Number	Percentage
Yes	24	41.3
No	33	56.8

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS

Neither principals nor professors overwhelmingly felt that current ethics training in principal preparation programs is adequate. These findings are particularly important given that only a few principals indicated any additional training in ethics beyond their certification program. Both professors and principals suggested a need for coursework in ethics, although the results from this study suggest that such courses are currently quite rare. These same groups suggested that instructional strategies such as case studies would help improve ethics instruction in preparation programs. Mentoring aspiring principals as they engage in field experiences was also strongly suggested. The findings from this research have emerged a number of notions that will help shape ethics programs for the future.

The way leaders understand and use ethical reasoning and decision-making impacts virtually every decision they make and every action they undertake; thus, ensuring that leaders are prepared to make such types of decisions is a key responsibility for leadership preparation programs. Many things in the administrators' background contribute to ethical decisions including values, beliefs, and even childhood experiences. Solid grounding in their own personal core values will equip them with the ability to analyze conceptually the flood of situations faced in the principal's practice. As Rebore (2001) said, "... if the decisions of administrators are not prompted by their core values, their decision making will be dislocated from their genuine selves and certainly will be manipulated by circumstances and whims" (p. 47). The charge to preparation programs is how to effectively initiate this awareness.

CONCLUSION

The importance of ethics in administration preparation programming is pragmatically essential to quality schools, districts, and governing bodies. All ethics courses can only serve as a catalyst in stirring each participant's personal core values and belief systems as they consider decision-making positions regarding various situations. The difficulty associated with the inclusion of ethics in graduate work is that the content can not be just fact and comprehension. The content must be facilitative in order to cause a dissonance between what practice the person exhibits based on their own morality and honesty and what the expected behavior should be. Participant involvement must reach dialogue and not mere discussion to force consideration of what each ethical consideration looks like in practice. Consequently, professors and consultants must possess facilitation skills that allow metacognitive development in individuals, thus allowing these persons to consider a higher level of reasoning that will hopefully impact their ethical reasoning.

Most principals are likely involved in decisions that require an ethical position on a daily basis. The decisions and behaviors of upper level administrators, such as those in central office, may influence the way principals decide certain issues; cultural norms and local expectations often dictate behavior, even when an individual might otherwise behave differently (Schlechty, 2002). Consequently, leadership preparation programs are more obligated than ever to help future leaders understand the impact of their decisions and how their ethical values impact the day to day happenings on their campus. Every decision a principal makes impacts not just him or herself, but also the students, teachers, and other constituents that the principal serves. With this responsibility in mind, universities should consider the following ideas for best practice as they develop courses in ethics and determine what content these courses should include:

- Description of ethical and moral concepts to be adopted for the program

- Alignment of these ethical concepts within and among program coursework

- Inclusion of activities and cases that allows (or requires) students to consider their personal beliefs and decision-making potential.

- Professional development for each professor on how to effectively enable students to develop and use higher order thinking skills.

Understanding and teaching ethics is a time-consuming process. Time devoted to helping students understand their core values is important, and time devoted to creating opportunities for students to apply ethics in real leadership situations is critical. A lack of understanding of the importance of this process may help explain

the number of principals (60%) who indicated that their preparation was adequate using lecture and case studies. Simply discussing ethics is not enough: “preparation programs have to move beyond the simplistic notion that having students analyze cases involving complex ethical issues and challenges satisfies their preparation to exercise moral leadership in the field” (Starratt, 2004, p.136). Enabling students to discover those values that will drive ethical decisions in the real world requires time and patience on the part of both the instructor and the student. In fact, “leadership preparation programs have to continually challenge candidates to probe the grounding of their ethical principles and moral values as human beings, as educators, and as citizens” (Starratt, 2004, p. 136). Encouraging students to engage in application-level, real world experiences that require ethical thought processes is a critical step to ensuring that these students are prepared to be effective future leaders.

Leadership preparation programs are overburdened with important and sometimes conflicting issues regarding the use of their time and content; these varied responsibilities may overshadow their best intentions to include ethics in their coursework. However, ethics is too critical to the future of quality education and effective leadership to be overlooked or omitted. As Starratt (2003) explained, “Ethical education is integral to any process which deserves the name of education, for knowledge that is important to the human family has, in one way or another, ethical implications” (p.135). Our future leaders and the students they will serve depend on it.

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From Practicing Pedagogy to Embracing Andragogy: How to Switch “Gogy”s to develop a “Self-As-Principal” Voice in Principal Preparation Classrooms

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INTRODUCTION

Many principal preparation programs teach students with pedagogy, the science of teaching children. Many students graduate from their programs without the confidence to lead schools. One reason is that they were unable to develop their “Self-As-Principal” voices in these pedagogical classrooms.

Hines (2006) stated that a “Self-As-Principal” voice is the confidence to serve a school leader. According to him, this voice is made of an inner “Self-As-Student” voice and “Self-As-Teacher” voice. The “Self-As-Student” voice represents the students’ precollegiate and preservice pedagogical learning experiences. The “Self-As-Teacher” reflects the students’ preservice and inservice pedagogical teaching experiences. The “Self-As-Student” voice and “Self-As-Teacher” voice guides the negotiation of the “Self-As-Principal” voice. This study sought to identify the andragogical factors that could develop students’ “Self-As-Principal” voices in a principal preparation classroom.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study has its’ foundation in social constructivist theory. The social constructivist theory states that the classroom environment is created by teachers and students (McCarthy, 1994). That is, the learning environment is a creation of reflective and supportive curricular experiences among students. This social construction arouses and sustains students’ confidence and motivation to negotiate success and achievement.

From Pedagogy to Andragogy

In the 20th century, pedagogy was used to implement child-centered teaching practices into American schools (Karmiloff-Smith, 2001). Educational psychologists’ used pedagogy to elicit conditioned responses from adults and children (Delahaye, Limerick, & Hearn, 1994). In the early 1920s, adults and adult educators began to reject pedagogical teaching strategies such as lectures and skill and drill routines. One vocal opponent was Eduard Lindeman.

In 1926, Lindeman (1926) introduced andragogy with his book *The Meaning of Adult Education*. Here, he posited that adults are independent thinkers who can construct new knowledge from past experiences. Knowles (1968) also defined andragogy as the science of teaching adults. He specified that self-directed, experiential learning should be used to enhance adults’ learning experiences because these experiences provide adult learners with a sense of self, purpose, and meaning. According to Knowles, the instructor creates the learning environment through facilitating the discovery and pursuit of new information. To put structure to strategy, the instructor incorporates the adults’ thoughts and opinions into each phase of instruction.

Andragogical Relevance to Student Voices

A significant theoretical underpinning of andragogy is adult students' voices. A student voice is a reflection of personal perspectives and experiences on issues and situations. Giroux and McLaren (1994) stated that students' voices should have as much value and influence as the instructor's knowledge and expertise. The reason is that these voices are central to developing students' acceptance of the curriculum and instruction.

According to McCarthy (1994), the students' voice is a prerequisite for creating inclusive classrooms. Sanders and Kardia (1999) stated that inclusive classrooms consist of instructors and students who create a collaborative learning environment. Students are encouraged to express diverse opinions on the content of the classroom. The students also learn that their experiences and values influence their judgment and interpretations of classroom activities. Other inclusive values are thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and achievement. This and the other ideas anchored the analysis of how to create "Self-As-Principal" voices in the principal preparation classroom.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of five (23%) African-American, five (23%) Hispanic-American, and 12 (54%) Caucasian-American master's of educational leadership students. The 22 students were enrolled in the researcher's the Role of the Principal Class.

Instrumentation

The researcher issued a questionnaire to the students. The students then completed and returned the questionnaire to the researcher. The questions included in the survey instrument are listed below.

1. How did the LENS Activity reinforce the significance of including students' voices in principal preparation classrooms?
2. How have or will you use the LENS activity to enhance the inclusion of students' voices in your classroom?
3. Explain how the LENS activity related to your past experiences as a teacher and K–12 student.
4. After participating in the LENS Activity, I strongly believe that the principal's role in creating inclusive classrooms is . . .
5. How did the LENS Activity enhance your appreciation of the voices of other principal preparation students?

Answers to these questions provided the researcher with a holistic view of students' perspectives on using their voices to development the aims and goals of the principal preparation classroom.

Validity of Instrument

The researcher achieved content validity by assembling a panel of eight professors of educational administration to review the designated LENS activity and evaluative questions. Their feedback was used to revise the instrument.

Data Analysis

Coding procedures were used to analyze the open-ended responses.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study consisted of only 22 students who gave responses that may be only indicative of their region. Notwithstanding, this study is still valuable to the field of educational administration. The reason is that this study reinforces the significance of including students' voices in the classroom.

RESEARCHER SUBJECTIVITY

The researcher used trustworthiness to neutralize subjective influence. The researcher followed Guba's procedures of using conformability and transferability to establish the trustworthiness of this study. Confirmability was established through the panel's confirmation of the interpretations of the answers. The researcher established transferability by giving a rich description of the activity and answers to the questionnaire.

CASE STUDY

The researcher facilitated this study by creating an activity entitled "Have You Looked into My LENS (Learners' Everyday Negotiating Strategies)." This activity used the principal preparation students' voices to develop their understanding of the significance of creating inclusive K-12 classrooms. The developmental materials were chart paper, crayons, and sunglasses.

Pink crayons and sunglasses represented the Caucasian-American students' opinions and experiences. Brown crayons and sunglasses represented the Hispanic-American students' opinions and experiences. Black crayons and sunglasses represented the African-American students' opinions and experiences.

The chart paper was divided into three 2-page sets. The first pages of the first set were inscribed with the words, "African-American Learners". These words were written with a Black crayon. One cover page was inscribed with the words, "Caucasian-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Pink crayon to reflect the Caucasian-American students' perceptions of African-American learners. The second cover page was inscribed with the words, "Hispanic-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Brown crayon to reflect the Hispanic-American students' perceptions of African-American learners. The third cover page was inscribed with the words, "African-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Black Crayon to indicate the African-American students' perceptions of their learning styles.

The first pages of the second set were inscribed with the words, "Caucasian-American Learners." These words were written with a Pink crayon. The first cover page was inscribed with the words, "Caucasian-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Pink crayon to symbolize the Caucasian-American students' perceptions of their learning style. The second cover page was inscribed with the words "Hispanic-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Brown crayon to reflect the Hispanic-American students' perceptions of Caucasian-American learners. The third cover page was inscribed with the words, "African-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Black Crayon to reflect African-American students' perceptions of Caucasian-American learners.

The first pages of the third set were inscribed with the words "Hispanic-American Learners." These words were written with a Brown crayon. One cover page was inscribed with the words "Caucasian-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Pink crayon to reflect the Caucasian-American students' perceptions of Hispanic-American learners. The second cover page was inscribed with the words "Hispanic-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Brown crayon to reflect the Hispanic-American learners' perceptions of their learning styles. The third cover page was inscribed with the words "African-American Perspectives." These words were written with a Black Crayon to reflect the African-American students' perceptions of Hispanic-American learners.

The researcher placed each page set on a different wall. A wall was designated for describing the learning characteristics of African-American students, Caucasian-American students, and Hispanic-American students. The researcher began this descriptive activity by providing each group with sunglasses and crayons that represented their ethnicities. They were then instructed to stand in front of another group's ethnic wall. The students were then instructed to locate the cover page that represented their ethnicity. Students then lifted the cover page, discussed their comments, and wrote their interpretations of the targeted ethnicity's learning characteristics.

While at the "Caucasian-American Learners" wall, the other groups wore their respective sunglasses to discuss the characteristics of Caucasian-American learners. One group member wrote the perceived characteristics on the chart paper. When standing at the "African-American Learners" wall, the other ethnic groups repeated the same steps regarding the African-American students. While at the "Hispanic-American Learners" wall, the other groups followed the same procedures to discuss and write their perceptions of the Hispanic-American students.

The students then returned to their respective walls. They lifted their ethnic cover pages and discussed and described learning characteristics. The students then lifted the other ethnic groups' cover pages to compare and contrast interpretations of the learning characteristics. The Caucasian-American students learned that the Hispanic-American students labeled them as being "Competitive" and "Aggressive" learners. The African-American students labeled them as being "Assertive" and "High Strung" learners.

The African-American students learned that the Caucasian-American students labeled them as being "Energetic" and "Verbal" learners. The Hispanic-American students labeled them as being "Relationship-Oriented" and "Expressive" learners. The Hispanic-American students learned that the Caucasian-American students labeled them as being "Obedient" and "Loyal" learners. The African-American students labeled them as being "Caring" and "Respectful" learners.

The researcher then instructed the students to place the sunglasses and crayons at their respective walls. The students then moved to the other students' ethnic walls. While standing at the "Caucasian-American Learners" wall, the students wore Pink sunglasses to view the Caucasian-American students' descriptions of their learning characteristics. When standing at the "African-American Learners" wall, the other students wore Black sunglasses to view African-American learners' views of their respective learning characteristics. While standing at the "Hispanic-American Learners" wall, the students wore Brown sunglasses to view the Hispanic-American students' views of their respective learning characteristics.

After reviewing each wall, the students discussed how they were impacted by the other students' interpretations of them. The students indicated that after revisiting the Caucasian-American wall, they learned that Caucasian-American students were "Considerate", "Reflective", and "Serious" learners. After revisiting the African-American wall, the students learned that African-American learners were "Respectful", "Helpful", and "Expressive" learners. After revisiting the Hispanic-American wall, the students learned that Hispanic-American students were "Dependable", "Outgoing", and "Talkative" learners. At the conclusion of the information sharing session, the researcher provided the students with a few hand-outs that described additional learning characteristics of each ethnicity.

RESULTS

At the conclusion of the LENS Activity, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the students. Listed below are the responses from students.

1. How did the LENS Activity reinforce the significance of including students' voices in classrooms?

The Caucasian-American students indicated that the LENS activity galvanized them to evaluate hidden prejudices that may be apart of their views of other ethnic groups. For example, one Caucasian-American student stated:

"It made me consider prejudice: my own personal biases of our students."

The African-American students and Hispanic-American students indicated that the LENS activity helped them to realize how past experiences can impact students' points of view. As an example, consider the following response from an African-American student.

"This activity made me realize the place we come from does affects our points of view."

A Hispanic-American student stated:

"Because of my previous experiences, I was able to see how this activity reiterates that everyone has a different way of seeing and interpreting certain situations. How I see it may not be the same as someone else."

2. How will or have you used the LENS activity to enhance the inclusion of students' voices in your classroom?

The students indicated that they try to create learning experiences that are inclusive of students' backgrounds and past experiences. Consider the following representative responses from the students.

"In my classroom, I try to create lessons that will address the students' various backgrounds. Because families are different, homes are different, values . . ."

"I have realized that students see me through their own lens-Thus, I try to teach lessons in a way that allows my lens to merge with their lens."

3. Explain how the LENS activity related to your past experiences as a teacher.

The students indicated that as teacher, they did not consistently consider or include the backgrounds and experiences of their students. Sample responses are listed below.

“I didn’t attempt to understand the cultural experiences of my students.”

“This activity reminded me of how I didn’t always look at students or parents from their perspective. This prevented me from some possible positive opportunities for relationships.”

“I sometimes and still do expect the students to only see things from my point of view.”

As K–12 students, the Caucasian-American students indicated that they were mostly surrounded by teachers from their ethnicity. As a result, they believed that the school climate was centered on their interests and needs. They also indicated that their schools may not have been equally considerate of other ethnicities. For example, one Caucasian-American student stated:

“We were a mostly Anglo school. I feel sure that we didn’t try to incorporate minority students’ needs and experiences in the school and classrooms.”

The African-American students and Hispanic-American students confirmed that the school was not considerate of their interests and experiences. They also believed that many school officials were prejudiced towards them. A Hispanic-American student stated:

“This activity brought back painful memories of how my teachers did not try to engage my heritage in the learning process.”

As another example, consider the following response from an African-American student.

“As a student, I was never allowed to voice why or how I solved a problem. Nor did I feel that I or other Black students had ownership in the classroom.”

4. After participating in the LENS Activity, I strongly believe that the principal’s role in creating inclusive classrooms is

African-American students and Hispanic-American students stated that the principal must express confidence in the consideration of all students’ voices and background experiences. An African-American student stated the following:

“By being an instructional leader who models appreciation and desire to create multicultural & multilingual practices and events.”

A Hispanic-American student stated:

“The principal must personally acknowledge the backgrounds and experiences of his students. Every student must feel their views are heard by the principal.”

The Caucasian-American students indicated that the principal’s role in creating inclusive classrooms is providing teachers with professional development on multicultural diversity.

One Caucasian-American student stated:

“Staff development-the principal must train the faculty and staff on how to work towards including students’ voices in the teaching and learning process.”

5. How did the LENS Activity enhance your appreciation of the voices of other principal preparation students?

The students indicated that the LENS activity increased their awareness and consideration of each other’s backgrounds and points of view. Some significant representative responses included:

“The LENS Activity made me aware of how different cultures looked at each other.”

“I saw that we all have and can overcome our biases if we are aware of what they are.”

These responses highlight the need to discuss the variables that may influence the creation of “Self-As-Principal” voices in principal preparation classrooms. The remainder of this paper consists of insightful interpretations regarding this concept.

DISCUSSION

This study yielded significant outcomes. For instance, all of the principal preparation students stated that their voices should be included in the classroom. The responses to question one indicated that the LENS Activity increased the students' awareness of the need to examine possible prejudices against children. The responses to question two indicated that the LENS activity increased the students' commitment to consistently include their students' voices in the classroom. These responses could be resultant of interacting with peers from those ethnicities. The responses may also be related to the results from the first part of question three.

In answering question three, the students admitted that they have not been fully considerate of their students' backgrounds and past experiences. In other words, they may not have consistently included students' voices in the classroom. This finding relates to research that highlights the lack of K–12 teacher consistency in incorporating students' voices in the classroom (Giroux & McLaren, 1994).

The researcher was able to develop a similar race-related assumption from the answers to some of the other questions of this study. The main assumption is that race influenced the students' views regarding the inclusion of their voices in principal preparation classrooms.

For example, the responses to question one indicated that the Caucasian-American students believed that the LENS Activity exposed innate prejudices towards other ethnic groups. The African-American students and Hispanic-American students revealed that the LENS Activity increased their awareness of how personal past experiences influence students' point of views. The students' conclusions reiterate the notion of perception being a significant determinant of thoughts, actions, and beliefs (Purkey, 2000).

In responding to the second part of question three, the Caucasian-American students revealed that they enjoyed unbiased K–12 schooling experiences. These students admitted that they did observe how African-American students and Hispanic-American students experienced discrimination at their schools. The African-American students and Hispanic-American students indicated that some school leaders overlooked their backgrounds and past experiences. These responses clearly suggest that these responses were constructed in accordance to the students' past experiences. Knowles (1984) believed that adults have a strong desire to share their experiences in the classroom.

The researcher believes that past experiences may have also influenced the responses to question four. The results from question four revealed that the students realized the principal was responsible for creating a climate that is considerate of all students' past experiences. The Caucasian-American students believed that the principal could accomplish this goal through staff development, workshops, and other professional development activities. Their beliefs may be resultant of the fact that they were taught by teachers who looked and perhaps thought like them. In other words, they were comfortable with the teachers who directed their learning experiences. As a result, they apparently want to influence the teachers to accomplish the same goals in their classrooms.

The African-American students and Hispanic-American students believed that the principal should directly inform students of their commitment to including their voices in the school. This belief doesn't necessarily indicate that the African-American students and Hispanic-American students do not recognize the value of providing teachers with staff development on multiculturalism. Because of being overlooked in the classroom, they may just feel that the principal should directly acknowledge the presence of all students. Overall, this discrepancy may be related to the differences in schooling experiences between Caucasian-American students and minority students.

Hooks (1994) indicated that minority students are more overlooked in the classroom than are Caucasian-American students. She further related that in many instances, the minority students' voices are neither welcomed nor developed in classrooms. According to her, minority students receive fewer enriched learning opportunities than do Caucasian-American students. Unlike Caucasian-American students, minority students face low expectations and stereotyping from teachers and other school officials.

It appears that this treatment may have defined some of the schooling experiences of the minority participants of this study. The African-American students and Hispanic-American students indicated that their voices were overlooked in the classroom. Many of them indicated that their teachers also stereotyped them. According to Dlamini (2002), these exclusive experiences are prevalent in higher education classrooms. This study didn't fo-

cus on the participants' experiences in higher education. Thus, this research doesn't provide conclusive findings on how the LENS Activity related to their previous experiences in higher education.

The research does show that in race, dialogue, and past experience may strongly influence the development of principal preparation students' confidence to succeed in the classroom. The responses to question five particularly suggest that the acknowledgement of past experiences can create a cooperative environment for developing these voices. Acknowledgement was seen in the students' meaningful dialogue regarding the learning characteristics of each other's ethnicities.

This cooperative atmosphere reconfirms the theoretical framework of this study. The students engaged in meaningful dialogue to address personal biases regarding the learning characteristics of other ethnicities. They also gained authentic experiences on how their personal beliefs and experiences can contribute to the development a cooperative learning environment. Thus, this LENS Activity indicated that dialogical discussion was a crucial determinant of students' abilities to gain knowledge from each other's lived experiences.

IMPLICATIONS

The results from this study bear significant andragogical implications for developing students "Self-As-Principal" voices in the classroom. First, principal preparation professors should share the governance of the classroom with principal preparation students. By trusting the professional expertise of the students, the professors could form a more personal and dialogical relationship with them. The students may then be more receptive to professors' ideas on and experiences in educational leadership.

Second, principal preparation professors should be sensitive to underrepresented students. As indicated in this study, minority students feel disenfranchised from schools. Consequently, they feel the need to continuously maintain a higher standing in the classroom (Hooks, 1994). Ross Gordon and Brown-Haywood (2000) indicated that adult learners want to learn from instructors who relate to their learning styles and cultural backgrounds. These students thrive on using resources that represent their cultural identities. By showing consideration of these experiences, the professor may be viewed as being considerate of minority students' innate feelings and experiences of isolation and loneliness. The students may then be more likely to form a bond with the professor and experience a sense of belongingness in the classroom.

Third, principal preparation professors should foster collaborative learning experiences among students. The social constructivist theory states that students have the backgrounds and past experiences to develop the class. The principal preparation professor should facilitate this environment though dialogical, collaborative learning activities. These experiences will help students to develop a well-rounded view of the principal's role in providing schools with effective leaders.

If the principal preparation professors incorporate this framework into the classroom, students' voices will be closely aligned with the goals of the principalship. In addition to students' interests and values, past experiences will have also guided this achievement.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Principal preparation programs mostly provide students with pedagogical educational experiences. This study showed that andragogy could be used to facilitate the development of these experiences. Malcolm Knowles (1984) specified that one of the most significant andragogical concepts is the inclusion of students' voices in the classroom. This study highlighted factors that determine the correlation between principal preparation instruction and the inclusion of students' voices in the classroom.

By participating in the LENS Activity, the principal preparation students were able to listen to and exchange ideas on their perceptions of each other's learning characteristics. As a result, they developed a better understanding of how past experiences and race influenced the voices in the classroom.

Above all, the overall interaction of race, dialogue, and past experiences inspired them to become more inclusive of their students' voices in the classrooms. Thus, principal preparation professors should strongly consider the impact of these variables in creating meaningful principal preparation classroom experiences. The reason is that they may empower students to depart their classrooms with more confidence to lead schools.

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Best Practice for Ethical Educational Administration: Non-dominated Discourse

Kelly McKerrow and Erin Bullerdieck

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the twenty-first century has seen a rise in postmodern angst, an emphasis on individualism, and a subsequent de-emphasis of collectivism (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Putnam, 2000; Trow, 1980). This cultural shift has implications for the field of ethics generally and educational administration specifically. Recently, a body of literature emerged that attempts to understand school administration within an ethical context (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Fazzaro, Walter, & McKerrow, 1994; Kultgen, 1988; Raywid, 1986; Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1994). From a practical perspective the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) standards and dispositions reflect a similar shift in educational administration toward ethics.

Starratt (1991) constructed a theoretical basis for ethical educational administrative practice and a few years later proposed the practical application of that theoretical foundation (Starratt, 1994). In that work, Starratt (1994) joined three ethical perspectives to discuss how to build an ethical school. These perspectives included the ethic of critique, the ethic of justice, and the ethic of care. A fourth perspective, an ethic of non-dominated discourse, is introduced here as a necessary compliment to Starratt's three ethical perspectives. This paper advances the conversation about ethical decision-making in educational administration. It argues that non-dominated discourse ought to be considered a necessary disposition among administrators. Since administrative "best practices" cannot be unilaterally prescribed without discourse and agreement among professionals, educational administrators should seriously consider the idea of non-dominated discourse as it plans to revisit the ISSLC standards and dispositions.

Non-dominated Discourse

Non-dominated discourse is not a new concept. It is generally understood in the philosophical and political literature. Mintz and Cohen (1976) suggest the necessity for non-dominated debate if the promise of the American Revolution was to mean anything. That promise was that people "are better judges of the common good than an elite or a king" (p. 59). Habermas' (1983, 2001) justification of democracy requires non-dominated discourse "to make participation, not cognition, possible" (p. 68). Non-dominated discourse also emerges in the educational literature. Dewey (1938) describes a non-dominated classroom as one in which the "teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities" (p. 59). Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1994) suggest that non-dominated discourse makes it possible for administrators to "evaluate and choose between competing moral claims" (p. 13).

In the context of teacher evaluation, Glass and Martinez (1993), following Habermas (1983/2001), define legitimate social choice as "one that has the consensus of a community of citizens and that consensus was reached in open and undominated discourse" (p. 10). Finally, Sarason (1990) argues that non-dominated discourse is a

political-moral issue that “rests on the value that those who are vitally affected by decisions should stand in some meaningful relation to the decision-making process” (p. 63). For the purposes of this paper, non-dominated discourse is an inclusive process for democratizing educational organizations, avoiding hierarchical bureaucracy, and appreciating legitimate decision-making authority in every context.

Democratic Decision-making and Non-dominated Discourse

Teaching and administration are political acts. This is often lost on educational administrators, policy-makers, and academics who construct an administrative narrative that characterizes schools as controlled, hierarchically arranged, discreet classrooms managed by teachers and overseen by administrators (Cusick, 1992). This narrative blinds them to their fundamental role in promoting democracy. Lost in romanticized notions of freedom, offended by the banal politics it implies, or overwhelmed by contemporary American culture and the individualism that characterizes it, administrators and academics seem disconnected from the ideal that public education represents. That is to guarantee free, appropriate, public education to all. They have constructed an administrative narrative in a professional vacuum that operates on the assumption that administration is central to teaching and learning (NASSP, 1990; National Leadership Network, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1995). The most recent literature in educational administration suggests that it is not (Crow, 2006; McKerrow, 1997a; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

It is public education’s role in democracy, the freedom democracy brings, and the non-dominated discourse it implies that can make sense of Starratt’s (1991; 1994) call for critique, caring, and justice as they relate to education. Non-dominated discourse is the vehicle that promotes critique, care, and justice by establishing a framework for all voices to emerge. Ethical, educational, and democratic decision-making requires a discourse that satisfies four conditions. First, the interests of each individual must be fairly considered (Strike, 1993; Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1994; Strike & Soltis, 1985; Strike & Ternansky, 1993). Second, each individual should have a fair influence over decisions emerging from the discourse (Hodgkinson, 1991; Foster, 1986). Third, those affected by a decision should be a part of the decision-making process (Howe & Miramontes, 1992; Noddings, 1984; 1992; Purpel, 1989). Finally, accountability must be directed toward those who are directly affected by any decision (Mintz & Cohen, 1976; Sarason, 1990). That is, accountability is downward not upward as traditionally conceived in administrative models. For example, professors and teachers would be primarily, but not exclusively, accountable to their students. Administrators would be accountable to their faculty. Satisfaction of these four conditions guarantees that the discourse is not dominated by any individual or group of individuals (Strike, 1993; Strike & Soltis, 1985).

Non-dominated Discourse and an Ethic of Critique

One of the concerns of critical theorists is the potential for organizations to grow and accrue economic, social, or cultural capital at the expense of individuals or groups of individuals (Beck & Foster, 1999; Hill & Guthrie, 1999). Particular concerns are the unexamined rationalization for centering the organization at the expense of the individual, the possibility for exploitation, and the subsequent legitimization of unencumbered organizational growth. One mechanism used to mitigate the danger of the aforementioned is sustained, focused critique. Starratt (1991) suggests that an ethic of critique:

[P]rovides a framework for enabling educational administrators to move away from a kind of naivete about “the way things are” to an awareness that the social and political arena reflect arrangements of power and privilege, interest and influence, often legitimized by an assumed rationality and by common law and custom. The theme of critique forces the administrator to confront the moral issues involved when schools disproportionately benefit some groups in society and fail others. Furthermore, as a bureaucratic organization, the school exhibits structural properties that may promote the misuse of power and authority among its members. (p. 189)

Critique is a necessary process for uncovering Starratt’s concerns but it is insufficient. This is because the

critics, themselves, operate and argue from a narrative framed by power and privilege, interest and influence. The call for self-reflection is important but misses the point. Sustained critique is useful when it is done by critics who lack power, privilege, influence, and interest as well as those who have it. Otherwise, it is patronizing and paternalistic. Non-dominated discourse satisfies this condition. It also provides the practical mechanism for doing something about the issues.

Within an ethic of critique, there are traditional administrative and academic rationalities built into the history, structure, and evolution of any organization not to mention non-traditional issues such as class, race, and gender (Capper, 1993; Mills, 1990). One of the primary assumptions in the traditional narrative is that academics and administrators are the arbiters of organizational critique. This meta-narrative is privileged so that position rather than expertise or perspective determines the value of the critique. For example, it is customary that administrative perspective trumps teacher perspective which trumps parental perspective. Until there is a perspective free of these traditional assumptions changes will look like unsuccessful reform movements that litter education in the United States (Beck & Foster, 1999; Merz & Fuhrman, 1997; Sarason, 1996; Reyes, Wagsaff, & Fusarelli, 1999).

Non-dominated discourse is a requirement for egalitarian, democratic administrators, the academics who certify them, and the intellectuals who theorize about both. It provides a tool to move beyond the administrative narrative, to construct a more realistic perspective of education in a democratic society, to avoid the traditional domination of educational discourse, and to begin to formulate an ethical system that sustains education not administration. Celebration of historically silenced voices in education is central to the logic that supports democratic decision-making in public education. It requires administrators to shift away from privileged critique and subsequent domination of the narrative and seek ways to engage all constituents in meaningful educational reform. Full participation is central to meeting the ideal requirements of an ethic of discourse and subsequently to promoting an ethic of critique. Administrators, academics, and intellectuals need to examine the extent to which their privileged perspective interferes with full engagement. Most important they need to conscientiously examine what they are required to give up in the process.

Non-dominated Discourse and an Ethic of Justice

Justice is best understood by examining injustice. For example, school funding privileges comfortable and wealthy districts while disadvantaging communities with modest economic bases. Tracking protects the relative advantage of economically privileged students while inhibiting, by default, the acquisition of cultural capital among poor students (Driscoll & Kerchner, 1999; Lareau, 1993; 2004; McKerrow, 1997b). Teachers and administrators take advantage of their own social capital to secure the best teachers for their children while, at the same time, usurping the right to equal access of the students they displace by their requests. Academics in educational administration fail to acknowledge the blatant sexism in the current concerns over the national shortage of qualified [read male] administrative candidates. This is despite their understanding that, over the last ten years, they produced a surplus of individuals certified to be administrators but they happen to be female.

Starratt (1991) states, "We govern ourselves by observing justice" (p. 193). Yet injustice persists. There are three reasons for this. First, justice simply means different things to different people depending upon their particular perspective. Second, everyone understands, rightly or wrongly, that some perspectives are privileged. Third, the extent to which the privileged perspective usurps others and dominates the organizational culture is the extent to which injustice is likely to be ignored. Injustice becomes irrelevant to sustaining the dominant perspective, practically and theoretically. More is required than a simple call for justice. It gets a bit closer but even in combination with care and critique, it fails to move beyond an intellectual exercise that itself is privileged. Educational administrators must educate themselves by observing injustice. The only way to do that is through non-dominated discourse that enables them to examine injustice from all perspectives not just their own.

Starratt (1994) suggests debate is a way to facilitate justice. However, it seems that debate falls into the hegemonic trap of reducing the complexities of justice into a simplistic dichotomy of right and wrong. While organizationally efficient, it is too simple and favors those who are attractive and credible by popular American cultural standards. The dialectical winner take all mentality that emerges from debate seems antithetical to inclusion and expression. On the other hand, non-dominated discourse is fundamentally inclusive, does not privilege any particular person, groups of persons or points of view, and emerges from an ethic of care.

Non-dominated Discourse and an Ethic of Care

An ethic of care is problematic for most administrators and teachers. It implies that educators must care for students (Noddings, 1984; 1992). More to the point, an ethic of care requires that all students are cared for even if not by one particular educator. That is the administrative challenge. Educational problems emerge most often not because educators do not care but because all students are not cared for in the same way or to the same degree. There is an important distinction here. Individual educators too often are challenged to care as if the exhortation will make a difference in how students are cared for generally. Such exhortation, however appealing on a personal level, diverts attention from the sheer magnitude of the problem and the political and structural realities that interfere with an educator's ability to care for all students. This inhibits the search for solutions to the question of caring about all students.

Education and administration are public acts and cannot escape the reality that they are subject to and must operate within a political arena. That is why the absolute regard that characterizes an ethic of care, if it is to impact education, needs to be extended to the broader political context. Educators, individually and collectively, must insist that nothing interfere with the fidelity, loyalty, and respect that they have for students, parents, and community members—not economics, not efficiency, not unethical superordinates, not racism, not sexism, not classism. This requires courage and the willingness to pay a personal price by refusing to let anything interfere with maintaining absolute regard and equal respect for all students. Non-dominated discourse gives voice to all points of view, stimulates exposure to alternative perspectives, and mediates the power that is legitimated by the administrative narrative. More importantly, it constructs the basis upon which caring for all students is built.

Special education is a good example of public caring. The traditional, dominant, exclusionary discourse was recast in order to facilitate an absolute regard for disabled students (Codd, 1982). In this case, it was not the educators but the parents who insisted that their children be cared for like all other students. A new discourse, albeit one dominated by parents and advocates, stimulated thinking about alternative perspectives, limited the power of the majority to exclude students from the educational milieu, and overcame the reluctance of educators to modify what they did. Discourse in special education, non-dominated by the traditional educational paradigm, is currently recreating the ways educators think about and administer special education (Skrtec, 1995). The fact that most arguments for exclusion focus on efficiency, economics, and competition should be a constant reminder that the traditional narrative is still strong. Indeed, it is strong enough to prevent administrators from recognizing that education is about learning in a caring and just place. It is not and never was about budgets or schedules.

Ethical Disposition for Non-dominated Discourse

A disposition for non-dominated discourse offers a way to cultivate ethical decision-making and to facilitate Starratt's (1994) ethics of critique, justice, and care within schools. Given the democratic purposes of public education, it seems reasonable that non-dominated discourse could serve as a standard against which all educational decisions are judged. This continuous process of engaging every voice promotes Dewey's (1900/1991) moral good called *conscientiousness*.

The moral good is not truth-telling, benevolence, etc., but the attitude which is most effective in maintaining all of them. . . . It is the conscious recognition of the interconnection and unity which holds all the specific goods together, and the fact that a disposition which is effective in maintaining one will also be effective in maintaining another. (56)

Critique, justice, and care each supported by a disposition for discourse, non-dominated and inclusive, seem to offer an opportunity for conscientious moral decision-making. In addition, it compliments other fundamental moral principles used to examine ethical issues.

Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1994) suggest that one way to think about ethics in education generally and educational administration specifically, is to consider the principles of *benefit maximization* and *equal respect*. Benefit maximization requires that the morality of actions follows the consequences, that decisions should result in the greatest good for the greatest number, and that the consequences of the decision should reasonably serve the

interests they were intended to serve. Equal respect requires that people are treated as ends rather than means, that they are seen as free, rational, moral agents, and that they are all given absolute regard. What non-dominated discourse does is to tip the balance between the two in favor of equal respect.

Traditional administrative discourse and the practice that follows from it favor the principle of benefit maximization. This is not a bad thing unless it comes at the expense of equal respect - which it frequently does. Benefit maximization, by definition, assumes that some individual or groups will be excluded from educational benefit. It is also dependent upon the traditional narrative, which emphasizes efficiency, economics, and management, to drive decisions. For example, it offers an economic rationale for corporate marketing (Channel One, ZapMe!) to children in under-funded school districts. It also avoids the broader more fundamental democratic questions. Why are schools under-funded in the first place? Why must poor schools sacrifice their students to corporate predators when well-funded schools have the discretion to say no?

The principle of equal respect, in combination with non-dominated discourse, reconstructs Dewey's moral good or *conscientiousness* within a context of equal participation. It avoids domination by individuals or groups like business or educational administration. Sadly, it might be the case that the traditional narrative, with its emphasis on benefit maximization and its assumption of exclusivity, precludes any meaningful consideration of equal respect. Until there is the presumption of inclusion, there will not be, indeed, cannot be, equal respect.

A number of questions arise when one employs an ethical decision-making model that considers non-dominated discourse as a prerequisite for the emergence of the ethics of critique, justice, and care. The questions emanate from the particular ethic, the particular context, and the key concerns that relate directly to both of them. For example, from an ethic of justice in a poor rural school district, one might ask, "Are all students and groups of students across the region treated equally?" From an ethic of critique in a wealthy high school with a tracking policy, the question might be "Who or what group benefits from tracking?" From an ethic of care in a poor, urban, low-performing elementary school, the question might be, "Does statewide testing focus on the needs of the individual students?"

Raywid (1986) raises important overarching questions that transcend any particular ethic. Is there a willingness to respect and honor the rights of others to freedom and to growth opportunities? Is there a willingness to become allied with and to serve purposes beyond ones own? Is there a willingness to treat others as subjects not objects, agents not pawns, ends not means? Is the integrity of your dealing with others compromised? The most important question, and the one that characterizes the quality of the responses to all the others, is not, "Who gets to answer the questions?" but rather, "Who gets to ask the questions?" The degree to which the answer to the latter is restricted to a few individuals or groups is also the degree to which democratic participation is compromised and the entire discourse dominated.

CONCLUSION

A disposition toward non-dominated discourse in administrative decision-making is appealing for a number of reasons. First, it avoids concerns about the imposition of universal values and incredible metanarratives created to serve the interests of some dominant group, class, or school of thought (Bates, 1981; Lyotard, 1979). Second, it appreciates diversity as a fundamental human condition rather than a problem to be overcome (Capper, 1993; Fazzaro, Walter, & McKerrow, 1994; Freire, 1998; Skrtic, 1995). Third, it marginalizes the organization and reasserts the theoretical and practical fidelity to the individuals within it that democratic public education demands (Dewey, 1938; Dewey, 1900/1991; Hill & Guthrie, 1999; Perrow, 1986). Finally, and most important, it cultivates humility.

In 1996 the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium adopted standards that have framed the profession (CCSSO, 1996). In addition to the six standards, they created a series of dispositions that characterized the values and beliefs that administrators ought to bring to the profession (Murphy, 2002; 2002; Murphy, Yff, & Shipman, 2000). It is reasonable to begin integrating the idea of non-dominated discourse into the profession through the ISLLC process. This would capitalize on the experience and expertise of practitioners and professors, bridge the gap between theory and practice, and place critique, care and justice at the center of the profession rather than at the margins (Murphy, 2003).

There are serious implications to be considered in theory and in practice when cultivating a disposition toward non-dominated discourse within the ethics of critique, justice and care. The practicality of inclusion is one

of the more serious and yet most important issues. Sarason (1994; 1996) framed the problem as a *political principal* that called for the dismantling of the current structure of education. He also emphasized the necessity for administrators to promote respect and trust among various constituencies. Nothing so dramatic as the restructuring of education is called for here. Rather, it seems reasonable to capitalize on the work already begun by ISSLC that actively promotes the respect and trust that Sarason sees as essential for the continuation of a robust, democratic educational system.

Theoretically, there are hurdles because most of the research that guides administration is informed by positivist methodologies that exclude rather than include. The meta-narrative that guides both theory and practice needs to be carefully reexamined. Better methods for promoting the voices of everyone in public education need to emerge from administrative practice (Capper, 1993; Codd, 1982; Skrtic, 1995). Some of that work has already begun. Academics need to construct curriculum and coursework to support those practices (Murphy, Hawley, & Young, 2005). In addition, both administrators and academics need to be role-models and standard bearers.

The most important implication is the recognition that there is a privilege that has been extended through power, status, or leadership that administrators need to relinquish. Non-dominated discourse demands that the domination of public education by special interest groups (Kohn, 1998), by an ambivalent majority, by an amoral, consumerist culture (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004), and by educational administrators and those who teach them (McKerrow, 1997a) be stopped. If non-dominated discourse is practiced actively, the problem would take care of itself. For now, public education will remain dependent upon those willing to give up the privilege of being number one. The process of revisiting ISSLC standards and dispositions is a natural place to start.

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BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING

Case Pedagogy and Standards-Based Teaching

Brenda F. Graham and Pamela C. Cannamore

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the effectiveness of the content of case study textbooks that are utilized in educational leadership programs. The effectiveness and quality of schools is a priority on the list of the public's concerns. The emphasis on standards and accountability challenges traditional assumptions about instructional leadership. New accountability approaches differ from traditional systems due to their heavy emphasis on standards-based student achievement and the attachment of rewards and sanctions based on specified performance levels of students in schools and districts. Schools are required to disaggregate testing data and remove disparate testing results involving students who have traditionally had a higher failing rate than mainstream students. In addition, leaders must have an understanding of issues related to diversity, linguistic needs of children, learning styles and acquisitions, and other culturally related themes. Many educators and policymakers are questioning if the leaders are receiving adequate training in colleges and universities to help facilitate the growing needs of schools and districts (Fordham Foundation, 2003; Hale & Hunter, 2003; Tucker, 2003).

Significantly, school improvement rests to an unprecedented degree on the quality of school leadership preparation programs. In addition to principals and superintendents, other school leaders, university professors, and classroom teachers are all counted on to lead the challenge of working together to revitalize and strengthen schools by creating high quality learning environments in schools and districts.

Over the past decade a clearer consensus has developed among educators regarding the nature of leadership, and thereby leadership preparation programs, which is moving from a managerial model to a visionary collegial model focused on the centrality of student learning (McCarthy, 1999). Many researchers have questioned whether long-established approaches to preparing and licensing principals are sufficient for these shifting issues (Elmore, 2000, Murphy, 2001; Tucker, 2003). How we train and inspire perspective leaders does make a difference.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Colleges and universities are under increasing pressure to enhance the quality of leadership preparation. The challenge is to implement a program of study that will meet national standards for leadership preparation by embracing a student centered approach to learning. The goal is to develop practicing and prospective administrators, who have decision-making skills that are infused throughout with a solid theoretical foundation that enhances practice. This will enable them to "frame problems, think critically, and reflect on their decisions" (Kowalski, 2001). Kowalski (1995) asserted that the real challenges of professional education are to align theory and practice and to effectively use the reflective process to integrate professional knowledge with experience to create a modified knowledge base.

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What Is a Case Study?

Christensen and Hansen (1987) defined case studies as follows:

A case is a practical, historical, clinical study of a situation that has confronted a practicing administrator of a management group. Presented in narrative form to encourage student involvement, it provides data-substantive and process-essential to an analysis of a specific situation, for the framing of alternative action programs, and for their implementation recognizing the complexity and ambiguity of the practical world. (p.27)

Additionally, Lyford, et al (2000) asserted that as pedagogical tools, cases engage future school leaders' minds and enhance their learning by assisting them to develop higher level thinking skills needed for critical thinking and decision making. Importantly, The National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2004), challenged school leaders and educational leadership programs to have a collaborative model to guide research and practice. The mandate is to have a model that reaches beyond minimum performance and leads to excellence in both teaching and learning. On-going personal reflection and systematic assessment are an important part of such design.

Guided by these principles, the focus of this study will be on the content of case study textbooks that are utilized in educational leadership programs. Are school leaders being prepared for the challenges of today's schools? To what extent do cases used in case textbooks challenge future educational leaders for their role in today's schools? Specifically, this study questions: Are the cases used in educational leadership courses as pedagogical tools providing deliberate problem solving skills based on prescribed leadership standards and experiences that lead to on-going reflection and accountability?

Case Methodology and Standards-based Teaching

The importance of standards-based teaching is evident, and results are used to evaluate programs. Additionally, the accreditation of colleges and universities is based on the meeting of set program standards. The standards define what good leadership should include. Additionally, university leadership preparation programs use standards to assess and evaluate programs and learning outcomes. The standards are also compatible with guidelines established by national councils. Two such initiatives will be discussed in this paper. They are The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and the NCATE standards developed for programs in educational leadership for principals, superintendents, and curriculum directors and supervisors. These standards are also used for administrative and principal certification, for principal evaluation, and for professional development programs (Weindling, 2003).

The ISLLC standards were published by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1996 and have been adopted, adapted, or used by most states in developing their own administrator standards and licensing policies. Representing a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances, the ISLLC standards were written to help align leadership with productive enhancement of school and districts (Hart & Pounder 1999, p. 139 in Jackson, 2001). Kelly and Peterson (2002) observed that the standards are grounded in a basic understanding of school research and present a general framework for improving and restructuring initial principal certification programs. The ISLLC standards read as follows (Council of Chief State Schools Officers, 1996):

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standards 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (p. 10–21)

NCATE developed standards for programs in educational leadership for principals, superintendents, and curriculum directors and supervisors. Constituent members include AASA, ASCD, NAESP, and NASSP[f4]. The NCATE standards read as follows (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002):

Standard 1.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community.

Standard 2.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.

Standard 3.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

These standards address the knowledge, skills, and attributes required to lead and manage an educational enterprise centered on teaching and learning (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1996, p. 6 in Hart & Pounder, 1999, p. 138). The standards challenge leadership preparation programs to provide a problem based curriculum centered on real and challenging experiences that occur in schools. The incentive is to hone in on decision-making skills by incorporating processing that will produce analytical process skills.

METHOD

Randomized cases were examined from eight educational leadership textbooks from five publishers to determine if the content of the cases were standards-based and if they were structured to promote reflective leadership decision-making skills. The textbooks were organized primarily for use in advanced educational leadership and educational administration courses. Three of the books are written specifically for educational

Table 1. Case-Based Textbooks Utilized in Educational Leadership Courses.

Title of Textbook	Author	Publishing Company	Year of Publication/Edition
Supervision as a Proactive Process: Concepts and Cases	Daresh, John and Playko, Marsha	Waveland Press, Inc.	1995/2nd Edition
Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice	Hoy, Wayne and Miskel, Cecil	McGraw Hill Publishers	2001/6th Edition
Practicing the Art of Leadership: A Problem-based Approach to Implementing the ISLLC Standards	Green, Reginald	Pearson Education, Inc. (Allyn and Bacon)	2005/2nd Edition
Case Studies on Educational Administration	Kowalski, Theodore	Longman Publishers	2001/3rd Edition
School Law: Cases and Concepts	Lamorte, Michael	Allyn and Bacon	1996/5th Edition
Cases in Educational Administration	Merseth, Katherine	Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.	1997
School Leadership and Administration	Snowden, Petra and Gorton, Richard	McGraw Hill Publishers	1998/6th Edition
The Principal: Creative Leadership for Excellence in Schools	Ubben, Gerald, Hughes, Larry, and Norris, Cynthia	Pearson Education, Inc. (Allyn and Bacon)	2004/5th Edition

administration courses; one textbook is used primarily for school law coursework; one text centers predominantly on the supervisory process, and three of the books focus on school site-based leadership with an emphasis on the job of the principal as the instructional leader.

The books were placed in two distinct categories as related to textbook content and case review. The texts were defined as “course specific,” if they dealt with a particular content area of educational administration utilizing cases to present “real world” applications to the theoretical principles presented in the text. The term “case specific” was used to describe textbooks that used a variety of content in the delivery of cases to cover different administrative and leadership tasks. Very little theoretical information was covered in these texts, and they were utilized mainly as supplemental texts. All of the books are displayed in Table 1.

The selection of the textbooks was based on the utilization of a diversity of publishers and authors and was derived from the database of the publishing companies. The books represented include topics that are foundational such as school law and administration, as well as contemporary issues of professional practice focusing on topics such as instructional leadership and proactive supervision.

FINDINGS

The case study method is one of many pedagogical tools used in educational leadership courses in relations to leadership standards and mandates and offers a unique approach to bridging the gap between theory and practice (Merseth, 1997). While they are not intended to negate or limit the development of theory or observation of practice, cases provide an opportunity to examine theory and practice in concert with standards (Green, 2005; Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2004). Case study research also provides the focal point around which the participants’ expertise, experience, and observations emerge. In addition, the case study approach contributes to leadership competence in standards-based learning in relations to identifying opportunities, defining problems, gathering and integrating data, formulating strategies, and making and implementing decisions (Green, 2005; Merseth, 1997; Kowalski, 2001).

A list of the textbooks and the standards that were covered in each textbook is provided in Table 2. Table 2 also designates the textbook type (content area) and categories (“case specific” or “content specific”) of textbooks used in the study. As discussed previously, course specific texts deal with a particular content area of educational administration utilizing cases to present real world applications to the theoretical principles presented in the text, and case specific texts use a variety of case content to cover different facets of a school leader’s job and are used mainly as supplemental texts. All of the cases in our investigation were open-ended and provided frameworks for problem solving, critical thinking, and student reflection. A majority of the texts were course specific, (six out of eight) utilizing cases to link theories discussed in the texts to practical issues faced by schools. All authors provided a framework to provide both facilitators and students a platform for discussion. Merseeth’s (1997) and Kowalski’s (2001) texts presented a collection of administrative cases for use in multi-faceted situations to analyze and problem solve in a variety of content areas. Kowalski’s aim was to help “prospective administrators develop decision-making skills. Students are expected to frame problems, think critically, and reflect on their decisions” (p. vii). Merseeth also provided cases that represent real-life experiences and “open up the opportunity for a new kind of pedagogy in educational administration” (p. xii) that will assist students to define their role in terms of their capacity to enable teachers to teach. The cases are utilized in the courses in Merseeth’s educational policy and administration courses.

Both Ubben et al (2004) and Green (2005) linked cases with theory, contemporary literature on school leadership, and the ISLLC standards. Along with Daresh & Playko (1995), Hoy & Miskel (2001), and Merseeth (1997), they provided cases for all of the ISLLC and NCATE standards. Ubben et al asserted their book provides “the linkages between school leadership and productive schools, especially in terms of outcome for children and youth” (p. xix). Green provided “a compilation of scenarios that incorporate the leadership behaviors informed by the ISLLC standards and the design is to “assist prospective school leaders in understanding the standards and developing skills and attributes sufficient to put them into practice” (p. v). Both texts are aimed at principal level instructional leadership.

Table 2. Alignment of National Educational Leadership Standards with Authors.

ISLLC and NCATE Standards covered by authors								
Author	Daresh	Hoy	Green	Kowalski	Lamorte	Merseeth	Snowden	Ubben
ISLLC NCATE								
Standard 1	X	X	X	–	–	X	–	X
Standard 2	X	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Standard 3	X	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Standard 4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard 5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard 6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Category and Type of Textbook (either Case Specific or Course Specific)								
Case Specific	–	–	–	Educ Admin	–	Educ Admin	–	–
Course Specific	School Suprvsn	Educ Admin	School Ldrshp	–	School Law	–	School Ldrshp and Educ Admin	Instrtct Ldrshp

Standard 1 – Strategic Leadership: Creating a Vision of Leadership and Learning

Standard 2 – Instructional Leadership: Developing a positive school culture

Standard 3 – Organizational Leadership: Managing the Organization

Standard 4, 6 – Political and Community Leadership: Interacting with the School Environment

Standard 5 – Embodiment of Ethical Principles: Leading with Integrity and Fairness

Lamorte (1966) presented law cases and covered the standards related to course content (Standards 4, 5, and 6). The list of standards cited could be increased depending upon the assignment criteria and leadership facilitation. Hoy & Miskel (2001) incorporated all standards in their cases and provided “authentic cases. . .to challenge students to apply relevant theories and research to solve contemporary problems of practice in schools” (p. vi).

CONCLUSION

Publishing companies are addressing the issue of standards-based accountability by providing case based content material to address the contemporary issues of school leadership. In addition, student learning and experiences are enhanced by the use of pedagogical practices linking standards-based learning with infused theory and practical experiences.

There is much to learn, however, about case teaching and learning, much of which was not discussed in this paper; especially that of the role of the instructor or facilitator in guiding the discussion process. In addition, the personal philosophies and beliefs of the students in their exploration of cases is also an important element of case teaching that was not emphasized. Importantly, the impact on professional practice must also be understood. More research is needed to address these issues.

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A Teambuilding Model for the Educational Leadership Classroom

Patricia A. Marcellino

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

According to Levine (2005), “the quality of preparation of the nation’s school leaders ranges from ‘inadequate to appalling.’ University-based programs designed to prepare the next generation of educational leaders are not up to the task” (p.1). Levine suggests that aspiring administrators pursue a business degree in order to prepare for the role of educational leader. Levine’s conclusion has caused heated debate and re-evaluation of the educational leadership knowledge base (Creighton, Harris, & Coleman, 2005). At a private university located in suburban New York, faculty from the schools of business and education conceived of an educational leadership master’s degree program that integrates business and education concepts in its knowledge base. For example, one of the educational leadership courses applies a teambuilding model that integrates the work of business and education theorists. The teambuilding model developed by the instructor combines business and educational learning concepts, i.e. Katzenbach and Smith’s (2003) business team model with Senge’s (1990) systems team learning framework in concert with Johnston’s interactive learning model (1996, 1998) and reflective practice exercises (Johnston, 1996, 1998; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Currently, there has been an increase in utilizing team units (Kline, 1999; Polzer, 2003). Even modern media sources like *The Apprentice* or *Survivor* feature teams and are achieving high ratings with the general public. Teams are not new, but what is new is their increased prevalence (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Kline, 1999). But there seems to be a difference in the use of teams in business class settings compared to teams in educational class settings. The business team model emphasizes the task, job, or performance primarily, while the educational team model emphasizes the development of values, such as cooperation, respect and teamwork (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Kline, 1999). According to Kline (1999), there is no unified team model, but team members seem to work better when they are cooperating with one another. Therefore, the need for a teambuilding model that combines task delivery with developing teambuilding skills seems evident.

Unfortunately, not all teams are successful; sometimes teams fail (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Marcellino, 2005b). Too often, faculty set up teams haphazardly without laying the structural foundation necessary to support teams in the university classroom (Barbour & Harrell, 2005; Bolton, 1999). A team does not evolve simply because an instructor places adults into a group and labels them a “team.” It is recommended that teams be limited in size, develop rules, have clearly defined goals, clarify roles for team members, and focus on performance outcomes (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Kline, 1999; Marcellino, 2002, 2003; Polzer, 2003; Thompson, 2000). But when individuals interact on teams, team process problems may also develop, such as breakdowns in communication and individual team “tensions.” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Kling, 2000, Lipnack & Stamps, 1997; Marcellino, 2005b, Pacanowsky, 1995; Thompson, 2000). The instructor, therefore, needs to become alerted to team process problems as well as team performance problems so that team members may be guided and coached toward their team units.

STATEMENT OF GOAL AND PURPOSE

The goal of this chapter is to outline “best practice in research” through the application of action-research in an educational leadership program. Action-research or putting theory into action in the classroom builds on the qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Action-research is a foundational skill in this educational leadership program, largely because it embodies the relational process of constructivist learning that is central to administrative leadership (Lambert et al., 2002). While implementing the action-research model, the students’ goal was to develop their team skills as they interacted and engaged in the team process (Marcellino, 2002, 2003). The instructor and action-researcher’s goal was to enable aspiring administrators (n=63) to develop their team skills and apply a teambuilding model that integrated business and educational concepts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The teambuilding model that was developed by the instructor combined business and educational concepts, i.e. Katzenbach and Smith’s (2003) business team model with Senge’s (1990) system’s team learning framework. Teams were set up utilizing Johnston and Dainton’s (1997a, 1997b) reflective Learning Connections Inventory[®]. Reflective exercises were also applied based on the work of Johnston (1996, 1998) and Osterman and Kottkamp (2004). The instructor felt the work of these scholars was compatible.

Action-Research Design, Activities, Methods, and Assessment

The instructor and students in a graduate degree program applied action-research to an exploratory study of teams in five educational leadership courses at a private university. Mills’ (2003) action-research model formed the basis of the design. Action-research according to Bogdan and Biklen (1998) builds on the qualitative approach. Instructors who engage in action-research try to improve their own teaching as they engage in discussions with their students that will aid their learning and the learning of the instructor. Reflection is an integral part of the action-research cycle. Academics posit that engaging in reflective practice leads to self-awareness, growth, and professional improvement for instructors and adult students (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The instructor sought to support students in developing their team skills and sought to develop an understanding of the evolving team process so that the teaching of the course could be improved (See Model A).

Participants

There were 11 participants (2 teams) in the first course, 17 participants (4 teams) in the second course, 11 participants (3 teams) in the third course, 15 participants (4 teams) in the fourth course and nine participants (2 teams) in the final course. Within the 15 teams, there were 50 females and 13 males participating.

Activities for Achieving the Goal

Activity #1: Students were assigned foundational readings from noted theorists so they would become familiar with the business team model (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003) as well as gain familiarity with the systems oriented framework proposed by Senge (1990). Senge’s model (1990) is applied in both business and educational settings. Students were also asked to visit the Let Me Learn website (<http://www.letmelearn.org>), which outlines Johnston’s (1996, 1998) learning precepts and the tenets of her interactive learning theory. Johnston’s work has also been adopted in business and educational settings and her learning model is compatible with Senge’s (1990).

Activity #2: Diverse teams (n=15) were set up utilizing the Learning Connections Inventory (LCI)[®] developed by Johnston and Dainton (1997a, 1997b). Nationally and internationally validated, the inventory has test-retest reliability (Learning Connections Resources Website: <http://www.LCRinfo.com>) as well as content, construct, and predictive validity (Johnston & Dainton, 1997b). According to Johnston and Dainton, the inventory can help instructors and students develop an understanding of their own learning patterns as well as an understanding of their peers’ learning patterns.

Individual learners are represented by the four learning patterns of sequence, precision, technical processing, and confluence. The interaction of these four learning patterns defines the learner, the instructor, and the approach to learning that takes place in the classroom (Johnston, 1996, 1998). The four learning patterns are defined as follows (Silverberg, 2003):

Sequential: the process of organizing, planning, seeking order and consistency;

Precise: the process of using information and words, detail-oriented, seeking confirmation of what is valid, right, and/or true;

Technical: the process of practical, active, autonomous problem-solving;

Confluent: the process of generating ideas, reading between the lines, and making connections, comfortable with taking risks, trying and failing and trying again, seeking to do it “my own way.”

Johnston’s (1996, 1998) research-based approach advises setting up teams according to learning pattern constructs. Diverse teams were set up with members who were representative of leading by one of the four learning patterns. The instructor sought to set up diverse teams because they were thought to be more creative and could focus on problem-solving (Thompson, 2000). Individual scores and team scores (total scores in each learning pattern area and team mean scores) were distributed to all students. The instructor then attempted to guide team members toward initial team roles based on their preferred or lead learning pattern. For example, a sequential learner was asked to become the initial team organizer; a precise learner was asked to become the team’s initial communicator; the technical learner was asked to become the team problem-solver and the confluent learner was asked to become the team challenger or initial idea-generator (Marcellino, 2005a).

Activity #3: A communication support structure was set up for the teams. E-mail addresses were exchanged among team members and *Blackboard* discussion groups and *Blackboard* teams were set up. The *Blackboard* teams had only the students interacting. The instructor chose not to have access to the *Blackboard* teams because the thought was to give each team access to privacy and enable team members to freely communicate and identify with one another as team members. A list of suggested team tips, such as “make sure every team member is part of the communication process” was distributed. The instructor also described possible team problems for team members to be alerted to, such as communication breakdowns, team member withdrawal, product fragmentation etc.

Activity #4: After diverse teams were formulated, an outline of a team contract was distributed to students, which enabled students to focus on the team product or performance outcomes as well as the team process that would be evolving. The contract outline included team goals, rules, proposed meetings as well as product and process outcomes (Aranda, Aranda & Conlon, 1998). Team members engaged in discussions of individual team assumptions and negotiated these in their team contracts. Members were asked to sign their team contract when agreement was reached. Each team member received a copy of the contract for future referral and reference. Students were initially asked to return their contracts in a week’s time, but some teams extended the time span to two or three weeks. When completed, team contracts were compared.

Activity #5: According to Mills (2003), in action-research, instructor and students engage in a four point process of (a) focusing on a theme (in this case, the application of a teambuilding model, (b) data collection, (c) data analysis, and (d) the development of an action plan (i.e. for the students, developing a team topic and learning about the team process; i.e. for the instructor, a possible revision of the action plan or syllabus). Within the 15 teams, students conducted research on two levels, namely, they researched a team topic and they researched the team process that evolved. Teams were asked to investigate an educational problem and develop policy initiatives for that problem. Teams presented their initiative technologically to their peers for evaluation (Topping, 1998) and also developed a follow-up team policy paper, which outlined their initiatives.

Activity #6: Reflective exercises were applied that were suggested by Johnston (1996, 1998) and Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) in order to allow participants to interact and come to an understanding of their team members. For example, students shared their background or autobiographies, as well as their educational or management platforms with one another for evaluation. These platforms were compared and students were offered suggestions for improvement by their peers (Topping, 1998). Team trust exercises were also applied to enable students to become comfortable with one another.

Activity #7: Students provided the instructor with periodic updates in-person or e-mail regarding the team

process as it evolved. Follow-up discussion involving the team product and the team process also evolved in person, on e-mail, and on the *Blackboard* network. The instructor monitored the team process and applied instructional coaching when alerted by team members to team tensions or a possible team problem.

Activity #8: As final activities, students evaluated the team process and one another in an evaluative team questionnaire. In a reflective team essay, individual team members summarized what they had learned about the team process based on their interactions with their team members. This activity enables the instructor to gain multiple perspectives on the team process. Each team and team member tells a story that adds to the instructor's perspective as a practitioner and action-researcher.

Methods and Assessment Process

Assessment was based on self, peer (Topping, 1998), and instructor evaluation.

Because this was an action-research study, methods were triangulated to insure trustworthiness and credibility of the data (Mills, 2003). The methods became the data sources and assessment was based on these sources. Methods included periodic updates from team members in-person, by e-mail or *Blackboard*, pre-tested evaluative questionnaires, reflective exercises, and summative essays. Selected interviews were conducted as a follow-up after a course ended. Data were analyzed for themes and surprises (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A coding/categorization process was developed that analyzed the uniqueness of an item, its applicability to teams, and its relevance to the team process.

DISCUSSION, FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The main question asked by the instructor was: Can a teambuilding model (derived from business and education theorists) be applied in the educational leadership classroom? A majority of the participants (60) reported that the teambuilding model, which included both business and educational concepts, widened their knowledge base in regard to business (task completion) and educational (values) team concepts. For example, one team member stated, "we valued each contribution that was made and enhanced each other in the process. We enjoyed each other's company, but most importantly, we accomplished our task." A number of themes emerged.

Theme: Appreciating Diversity in Learning through Team Interaction

Students reported that the instructor's suggestion of initial team roles based on individual learning patterns helped team members expedite a team focus. One student stated, "people worked on tasks that matched their strengths and relied on others to take on tasks that they might not have been as skilled in doing." Students reported that they developed an appreciation of their own learning pattern as well as the diverse learning patterns of their team members. For example, student comments included,

I now see that when a team is comprised of people with different learning patterns, more seems to get done. The learning patterns helped me to understand why my team members acted the way they did. It makes sense to know people's learning patterns; it gives us a chance to look through a lens of people's strengths or preferences. Their patterns became so much a part of their personality that at times I felt as if I were reacting to patterns and not people.

Furthermore, students came to value the diversity of their team members within the team context. Students stated,

I am in awe of my team members and their creativity. [One team member] especially has the ability to think out of the box. Creatively, we pushed ourselves in a technological direction because of her. I never would have come up with those creative ideas by myself; [two of my team members] made certain things happen that I would not have initiated working alone. I am very sequential and organized in my thoughts. If things aren't structured and certain than I can't function at my best. When alone, I tend to make it more intense and this project helped me to learn more about others and enjoy myself too."

Theme: Taking the Time to Reflect about the Team Process

Furthermore, students indicated that taking the time to interact in teams helped them develop their team skills and learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the team process. One student commented, “The team experience was enlightening and helpful in so far as it showed me how to approach tasks in a positive way and learn to allow others to use their strengths to accomplish goals.” Team members stated that they shared responsibilities and leadership on their teams. Students viewed the sharing of leadership as a team strength. For example, students claimed,

We shared leadership and each one of us had a chance to be the driving force. We valued each other.

Four of us took turns at leadership . . . this was a good thing.

I believe with each task or topic that was discussed, a new leader arose. The individual who emerged as leader was the person whose strength addressed the task or topic at hand.

Some students indicated that they adapted through reflection and the influence of their team members. One team member wrote:

I began evaluating my own personality, needs and expectations and wondered how people would perceive my team qualities and skills. I was honest enough to know I was not perfect, but I was curious to see what imperfections would be most frustrating and bothersome to my team members . . . At one meeting, my team discussed my precise behavior and joked about my approach being somewhat obsessive. I acknowledged my first weakness observed by the team and realized that in the future, I must learn to work with people by being less stressed and projecting my anxiety onto others in order to get a job accomplished.

In contrast, one of her team members stated:

I felt like I was on *Survivor* because [one of my team members] needed to win everyone on her side about her ideas. I began to understand that this was just who [she] was. She needed everything to be perfect and although we all did, hers was more prominent. In the end, I learned to appreciate her style and way of doing things. As we combined to converse as a group, it became more personal and humorous. The load was no longer feeling heavy . . . we ultimately learned to share and create while maintaining our vision.

Theme: Learning About Teambuilding and Producing a Team Product

Students reported that they were able to widen their knowledge base about team units and complete their team task by developing accountability to the team. Not only did students emphasize task completion (business model), but they also began to value and appreciate the unique skills and abilities of their team members (education model). Team members commented,

The team was supportive, encouraging and fun to work with. We grew to care about each other and really know and enjoy each others’ strengths, weaknesses and all that goes with it.

This was a positive learning experience because I learned that I didn’t have to do it all by myself. I also learned to trust the expertise of other members of the team.

Overall, it was a positive learning experience. I would love to implement teaming at work.

I was pleased and satisfied with the results, my role on the team and the work of my team members.

Theme: Pulling Away from the Team

But difficulties also emerged on some teams, i.e. team tensions and team member withdrawal. All teams displayed evidence of team tensions; the so-called “successful” teams as well as the teams that had process problems. When team tensions were revealed to the instructor beforehand, the instructor discussed the problem with individual team members and sought to have each team member analyze the team tension from an individual perspective. Team members were coached to first evaluate their own assumptions and perceptions about team units and team members by asking questions, like, “What could you have done differently?” and “What can you do to rectify this situation.” Usually, team tensions were traced to individual differences in expectations concerning the team’s productivity and the work of team members (Kling, 2000).

On three teams (Teams 5, 6, and 14), one team member withdrew from the team process. When this happened, the remaining team members (11) compensated for the “missing” team member and became more cohesive. In spite of the instructor’s efforts or the efforts of team members to bring these team members back into the team, these individuals continuously withdrew. Because of this, the other team members felt they had not achieved team status as outlined by Katzenbach and Smith (2003) in their team performance graph (p. 84). They rated themselves as a “pseudo team” or a “potential team” rather than a “real team.” In addition, the more precise learners on the team rated the team lower than the other team members because as one precise learner stated, “the team experience was not perfect.”

In the second course, team members claimed to withdraw because of role confusion. Unfortunately, their roles were not clearly delineated on the teams and team roles were shared. The female team member on team 5 wrote, “I was confused about my role on this team.” The male team member on team 6 stated, “I was not satisfied with my role on this team.” In the final course, the female team member claimed, that her contributions “were not accepted by the others in the contract or the project.”

Theme: Fragmented Products Are Traced to Team Contracts

Team contracts helped students formulate team rules, goals and focus on performance outcomes (Aranda, Aranda, & Conlon, 1998). But sometimes, team process problems and product problems could be traced to the team contracts if they were hurriedly conceived or did not include all team members in the construction of the contract. For example, one team member stated, “we spent more time on our team contract because we wanted to get it right.” But on two teams (team 2 in the first course and team 8 in the third course), team members planned their team product as separate entities in their team contracts. Instead of presenting unified products (technological presentation and/or policy paper), it was clearly evident where one team member’s work began and ended. On team two, this fragmentation was based on minimal interaction of team members. Students worked separately throughout the time allotted for the team project. Instead, of working on a unified project, they worked on their own individual projects under a loosely conceived team umbrella (Marcellino, 2005b).

On team eight, students did interact, but their product still resulted in fragmentation, which again could be traced to the team contract. In the case of team two, process was affected because there was limited team interaction, but in the case of team eight, students did interact and came to value one another’s contributions. A team member on team 8 said, “even though we decided to work on our own from the beginning and our individual topics were stated in our team contract, we did interact and comment on one another’s work.”

On team 11 (fourth course) and team 15 (final course), team members had not intended to present a partially fragmented team product (presentation or paper). On team 11, students were able to present a unified team policy paper after receiving instructional coaching. On team 15, suggestions were presented to the students by the instructor in order to submit a unified team paper. Students on both teams did not recheck or revisit their contracts to make sure that all contract stipulations were followed as outlined. Overall, students are reluctant to discuss team problems in an open class forum if team infractions appear contrary to team contract stipulations. Because of this, students are requested to revisit their team contracts and periodically questioned, . . . Each time, there were process and product problems, the instructor went back to the drawing board and made changes to the team model. Additional questions for discussion specifically dealing with the team contracts now are posted to the *Blackboard* network.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On all teams, there were students who tried to make the process work and tried to apply the guidelines suggested by the instructor and the team theorists (Johnston, 1996, 1998; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Senge, 1990). The majority of students (60) reported a widening of their knowledge base in regard to the team process and in developing an appreciation for the unique skills and abilities of their team members. Students learned about the external process of producing a team product and the internal dynamics of the team process (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Kline, 1999; Senge, 1990). Moreover, team members on 8 (out of 15) teams indicated that they had become “real teams” or “high-performing teams” (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003, p.84).

Unfortunately, as indicated by team theorists, sometimes teams do not achieve all their goals or outcomes even with the best intentions (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Kline, 1999; Senge, 1990; Thompson, 2000). When this happened, students learned the pitfalls of teaming in regard to product and process development (Marcellino, 2005b). According to Mills (2003), “human beings, however, are very complicated organisms, and compared with chemicals—and mice, for that matter—their behavior can be disorderly and fairly unpredictable” (p.3).

Because multiple perspectives were provided from team members, the instructor too learned from the team process that evolved. At the completion of each course, the instructor updated and made changes to the teambuilding model (See Model A). The instructor has learned to monitor the team process more diligently with more periodic updates so that team tensions can be lessened (Kling, 2000). In the future, after general discussion takes place in the classroom, the instructor posts additional questions on the Blackboard network so that additional information on a team’s progress or a team’s contract is rendered. Moreover, the instructor has learned to limit the size of teams to four members to prevent role confusion in order to prevent withdrawal of team members. But based on a particular course’s enrollment, this is not always possible. When there is a fifth team member, a fifth team role is recommended, which is initial team facilitator. Six member teams are no longer considered viable options. Three member teams are preferred, with all team members sharing the least preferred team role. When team members perform a role initially on a team, they seem to identify more readily with the team.

The application of a learning model that focuses on learning patterns (Johnston, 1996, 1998) and the LCI® may help educational professionals (including university professors and aspiring educational administrators) increase their own learning and their awareness about the learning of others. By focusing on a new category of learning differences as represented by the diversity in learning patterns, perhaps the “old” categories of individual physical and cultural differences based on age, race, ethnicity or gender may be minimized or overridden. The cooperative education model was originally implemented to ease racial differences (Stewart, 1982); perhaps Johnston’s interactive learning model can do the same by creating a new non-threatening category of differences, i.e. the diversity of learning patterns.

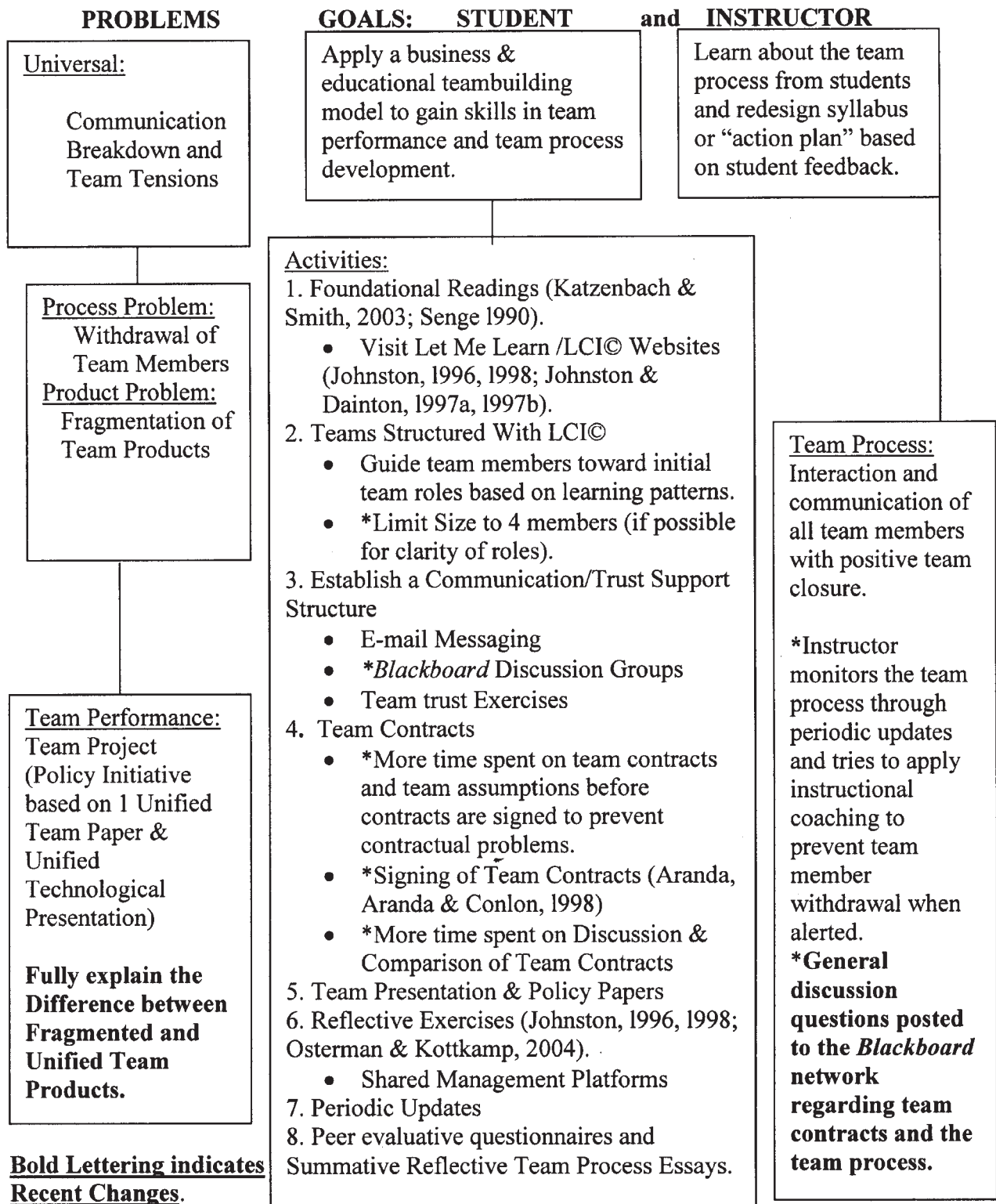
Students came into this leadership course with their own personal mastery; they shared a vision and many were able to experience collective team learning (Senge, 1990). The goal of the action research is that students will continue to engage in reflective practice and examine their assumptions and mental models concerning the team process. Learning about leadership and teambuilding is a process that is not easily accomplished in a semester. It is a process that hopefully will continue to evolve as these aspiring educational leaders continue to perfect their craft on-the-job by interacting and collaborating in teams with school stakeholders – teachers, administrators, staff personnel, parents, community representatives and students.

While business and education share a common theoretical knowledge base, the application of the methods and techniques of implementation in regard to teams are different. This should not be. Because people working within business and educational organizations today must continually adapt and change, there is a need to emphasize, balance and fuse both models. The business team performance model works positively when teamwork and cooperation are injected into the equation. The educational model functions positively when performance is stressed. Both disciplines should strive for a balance between performing the task effectively and developing cooperative and collaborative team members. The application of a teambuilding model based on business and educational concepts seems especially useful in broadening the knowledge base of aspiring administrators.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

These action research results were indicative that a teambuilding model that combines business and educational concepts may widen the knowledge base of educational leadership instructors who utilize teams in the educational leadership classroom. Even though the instructor’s teambuilding is still evolving with each action-research iteration, aspects of this model may be adapted to various classroom disciplines.

The concept of sharing leadership on teams is currently an emerging area of research (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Presentation of the results of this action-research study may add to the concept of sharing leadership on teams. Previous research on team leadership focused on the individual leader within the team, rather than sharing leadership on teams.



Model 1. Team Building Model.

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The Role of the School Leader in Teaching Reading to Limited English Proficient Students: A Professional Development Model for Administrators and Teachers in Rural Schools

Linda M. Creighton

Professional development is critical for administrators and teachers to meet the challenges of the growing and diverse number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in our public schools. The challenge is especially acute in the teaching of reading to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in rural schools.

Rural schools are schools located in areas with a population of less than 2,500 as defined by National Education Association (2004) and face unique challenges for developing programs to serve the linguistic and cultural needs of English Language Learners: (a) limited experience with ELLs; (b) a shortage of certified English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or bilingual teachers; (c) a shortage of translators with the proficiency to speak, read, or write in the students' home language; and (d) limited curriculum materials in the students' first language.

It is estimated nationwide that 5,044,361 Limited English Proficient students were enrolled in public schools (PK through grade 12) for the 2002–03 school year (Bérubé, 2002). This number represents an 84% increase over the reported 1992–93 public school enrollment. The United States Department of Education's survey of the States' Limited English Proficient Students, Office of English Language Acquisition (2004) reveals that the state of Texas had a LEP enrollment of 442,677 in the 1993–94 school year and 660,707 in 2003–04—an increase of 56.3%.

As reported by Bérubé (2002), 56% of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the United States are enrolled in urban communities and the remaining 44%, in rural schools. These rural schools enroll from as few as 1 to as many as 500 LEP students district-wide in ESL programs rather than bilingual education programs (Bérubé, 2000). Bérubé continues, "Rural ESL programs continue to grow with nearly one third of small rural towns in the United States enrolling LEP students" (p. 9). The highest increase in number as well as in percentage of students in the United States not fluent in English are enrolled in the earliest grades with 60% in grades K–5 (Bérubé, 2000). According to the Office of Civil Rights (U. S. Department of Education, 1991), "LEP students are faced with educational problems confronting minority students generally, in addition to special problems related to the need to master a second language; moreover, the research indicates that it is not uncommon for one set of problems to compound the other" (p.2).

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

Definitions of Limited English Proficient Students

Several facts define a Limited English Proficient student: (a) Limited English Proficient (LEP) is the term for students who were not born in the United States or whose native language is not English and who cannot participate effectively in the regular curriculum because they have difficulty speaking, understanding, reading, and writing English; (b) English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a

technique that uses English to teach non-English speakers. English as a second language is usually a component of bilingual education; and (c) bilingual education is the use of two languages for instruction, English and the native language.

Numbers of ELP Students Nationwide

As stated earlier, it is estimated that approximately 5,044,361 ELL students were enrolled nationwide in public schools (PK through grade 12) for the 2002-03 school year. Among the states, Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas had enrollments of over 100,000 students, and 22 other states with a range of 20,000–100,000 ELL students. In twelve states the percent of the K-12 LEP enrollment was greater than 10% and an additional eight states indicate the percent ranges from 5-10 percent of the K-12 enrollment that is LEP (United States Department of Education, 2004). In 2000–01, states reported over 400 languages spoken by English Language Learners nationwide. The data submitted indicate that 79% of ELL students claimed Spanish as their native language, followed by 2.0% Vietnamese, 1.0% Chinese, Cantonese, 1.0% Korean, and 15.4% other (United States Department of Education, 2004). The role the principal plays in establishing staff development programs that address the needs of this burgeoning population of English Language Learners is paramount to the academic success of these at-risk students.

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A priority for principals regarding the teaching of reading to second language learners is to ensure that teachers receive the necessary professional development to effectively implement the reading program. The principal as the instructional leader must: (a) set expectations for continuous improvement in reading instruction, (b) ensure that professional development programs are aligned with the best practices identified for reading instruction for second language learners, and (c) stay involved in the professional development process. The principal is the vital player in this process and should be fully engaged in all components of the staff development throughout the year. The principal's presence at training events along with frequent conversations with teachers and staff about their professional development needs and the effectiveness of the training received demonstrate that professional development is a priority. The principal signals the importance of professional development by being actively involved in all aspects.

In an article entitled *High Quality Professional Development* retrieved from The English Language Knowledge Base online at <http://www.helpforschools.com>, it is suggested that schools develop a plan to serve their LEP population adapted to their district's needs. This plan should include four key elements: (a) knowledge of the law as it pertains to Limited English Proficient students, (b) development of an alternate language program, (c) notification and involvement of parents, and (d) provisions for ongoing staff development.

ELEMENT I: UNDERSTAND THE LAW

Districts are required to take affirmative steps to address the language development of national origin minority students where the inability to speak and understand the English language prevents the students from effective participation in the district's programs. The first element in serving students with limited English proficiency is to understand the legal requirements surrounding such students. These requirements must also be understood by the entire school community and not just school leaders and teaching staff.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Underlying Legal Principles

The OCR does not require or advocate a particular program of instruction for ELL students and nothing in federal law requires one form of instruction over another. Under federal law, programs to educate children with limited proficiency in English must be (a) based on a sound educational theory, (b) adequately supported so that the program has a realistic chance for success, and (c) periodically evaluated and revised as necessary (United States Department of Education, 1991).

Selecting the Educational Approach

It is the prerogative of the district to select a specific educational approach to meet the needs of its particular ELL student population. A district may use any educational approach that is recognized as sound by experts in the field, or an approach that is recognized as a legitimate educational strategy (i.e., Bilingual or English as a Second Language [ESL]).

Regardless of the approach selected by a district, in assessing compliance with Title VI, a two-fold inquiry applies: (a) whether the approach provides for English language development, and (b) whether the approach provides for meaningful participation for ELL students in the district's educational program.

Implementing the Educational Program

Once a district selects an educational approach, it must provide the necessary resources to implement the program. The variations in programs may be as diverse as the populations served by those districts. The need exists to describe and implement the educational approach in a written plan so that staff, administrators, and parents understand how the program works.

Evaluating the program. Under federal law, adopting an ELL program with a sound educational design is not sufficient if the program as implemented proves ineffective. Two central elements necessary for satisfying Title VI requirements for ELL students in the ongoing education of ELL students are (a) Is the program working? and (b) are ELL students gaining the proficiency in English that enables them to participate meaningfully in the district's education program? If a program is not working effectively, a school district is responsible for making appropriate adjustments or changes. This requirement is based on the obligation arising from Title VI for a school district to provide ELL students with meaningful opportunities to participate in its educational program (United States Department of Education, 1991).

ELEMENT II: DEVELOP THE ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

School districts have broad discretion in selecting appropriate language programs, but should consider three general areas when making a decision: (a) Is there a need to provide alternative language services? (b) Will the alternative language program effectively meet the needs of LEP students? and (c) Is the program approach backed by scientifically based research? The program chosen should be considered sound by experts in the field. If a district is using a different approach, it must show that it is considered a legitimate experimental strategy.

There are many approaches school districts can take to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient students. Dr. John Golden of the Aurora Public Schools in Aurora, Colorado developed what he calls *A Continuum of Services* (Golden, 1996) which school districts may want to consider when designing their programs.

Continuum of Bilingual Education Programs

Two-Way (Dual Language)

This is a program in two languages where the students are placed according to language and immersed in a second language. Ideally, 50% of the LEP students are of one language and 50% are English speaking. A dual language program involves instruction through two languages, where the target language is used for a significant portion of the student's instructional day. The major goals are high levels of bilingual proficiency, biliteracy, content area achievement at or above grade level, and multicultural competencies (Golden, 1996).

Developmental Bilingual

These programs employ bilingual teachers and are sometimes called *late exit* programs since students stay in the program until they can be literate in the native language as well as English. Instead of replacing the first language with English, the first language is enhanced and is used as a foundation upon which to build English (Golden, 1996).

Transitional Bilingual

These programs employ bilingual teachers whose emphasis is on transitioning students from the native language as quickly as possible to English in usually two or three years. This program is a replacement one where the student replaces the native language and culture with English and the American culture and does not encourage true bilingualism in two cultures and languages.

One Way Bilingual

This program uses teachers from foreign countries to work in bilingual programs. This may assist the student in learning content areas but it becomes a *one-way street* since the teacher usually can speak little or no English and cannot teach English to the students (Golden, 1996). Other complications can arise in that the foreign teachers may not be familiar with the American curriculum, methods of teaching, and second language acquisition processes. Sometimes the dialect of the foreign teacher may be different and American born ELL students may not be able to understand it.

Half Way Bilingual

This program uses teachers who are not completely fluent in the target language due to a shortage of teachers who speak the students' language fluently. These teachers have had a brief exposure to the language and are asked to serve as a bilingual teacher until someone who is more qualified can be found or until the person can master the language. A disadvantage of this program is that the students know more of the first language than the teacher. Due to their limitations in the language, these teachers cannot converse on a professional level with parents. It can take 5-7 years for the teacher to have a command of the language.

Translators

In many cases, translators are hired as teacher aides but end up doing the teacher's work at very low wages. As a result, there is often a high turn over of people in this group since they can often get jobs at higher wages outside the field of education. Often, their role is to listen to the teacher and then translate what the teacher says to the student. They often end up teaching the students themselves even though they are not teachers and may not know the content area subjects. When they are in the classroom translating, students may turn *off* the teacher who speaks English and simply wait for the translation. Language acquisition is postponed to a later time.

The policy a rural school follows in selecting a program for implementation is locally or sometimes state determined. Since policies can affect hundreds or thousands of LEP students across each state, they should be developed or revisited frequently to ensure that the approach used best meets the needs of the LEP students served (Bérubé, 2000). Chamot and O'Malley (1987), well established researchers on programs designed for LEP students, recommend these considerations to decide on a particular approach: (a) Is the approach grounded in well-controlled research? (b) Does the approach explain what and how the LEP student will learn? (c) Does the approach provide guidance for instruction?

ELEMENT III: PARENT NOTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Parent Notification

Before developing appropriate policies and procedures for notifying parents in an appropriate language, central office personnel should familiarize themselves with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) guidelines directly related to this topic. The district should then develop procedures to determine which documents should be translated into the language spoken at home. The building administrator should follow the established procedures to ensure that documents that are translated and distributed to parents of LEP students are in the home language. Administrators would be wise to maintain a file of qualified translators for language groups where the number

of students may be small. Translators, particularly those not employed by the school district, should be provided training on legal requirements, confidentiality policies, and basic school policies.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is an essential part of an ELL program. It is particularly more difficult due to the cultural differences that exist with the students' immigrant backgrounds. As a school enhances existing parent involvement initiatives, administrators need to be cognizant of ways to involve immigrant parents. Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires a school receiving Title III funds to implement an effective means of outreach to parents of Limited English Proficient students (National Education Association, 2004). Such outreach is to inform parents of how they can become involved with their child's education and be active participants in helping their child reach language proficiency and meet the state's academic standards. School administrators should develop their parent involvement programs with such requirements in mind. Policies and procedures formalizing the parent involvement program should be written.

ELEMENT IV: PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Title IX, Section 9101 (34) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) contains specific provisions addressing the qualifications of the instructional staff, the use of Title I funds to support professional development and notification requirements to parents about staff qualifications. The district's staff responsible for the instructional staff's recruitment and development should be aware of these requirements as well as the principal of each school receiving Title I funds.

High Quality Professional Development

High quality professional development should include activities that (a) improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable them to become highly qualified; (b) are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans; (c) give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards; and (d) improve classroom management skills. Additionally, professional development should be (e) sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting learning impact on classroom instruction; and (f) are not one day, short term workshops or conferences. Professional development activities may involve forming partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide in-service teachers and administrators the opportunity to work under the guidance of experts in research-based reading instruction. One example of available professional development is participation in *Project TRIAD: Teachers and Administrators Improving Reading for Limited English Proficient Students* at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

PROJECT TRIAD: TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IMPROVING READING FOR LEP STUDENTS

Project *TRIAD* is a five year federally funded grant awarded to Sam Houston State University's Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling from the United States Department of Education focusing on rural school districts' needs in research-based reading instruction. The purpose of the grant is to provide professional development in research-based reading to triads (cohort groups) comprised of a reading teacher of LEP students, a classroom teacher of LEP students, and an administrator from rural school districts in Southeast Texas. All triad groups are selected from PK-elementary campuses since it is believed the first four years of school are critical to reading by third grade.

Three reasons the grant focuses on rural school districts' professional development are (a) LEP students in

these regions are usually served by a majority of uncertified teachers in ESL/bilingual; (b) administrators, unless they are ESL/bilingual teachers themselves, may know little about leading instructional efforts for LEP students; and (c) it continues to be difficult to find certified ESL/bilingual teachers to serve LEP students in rural areas. The grant has eight objectives addressing staff development needs: (a) to train individuals in teams (triads) over the 5 years in research-based reading instruction, action research, curriculum alignment and development, mentoring, and parent assistance in reading through face-to-face class time and via distance education; (b) to train triads in mentoring, and then have the triads mentor new teachers who teach LEP students; (c) to develop and implement parent training modules related to reading with their children; (d) to help fund a Master's Degree in Instructional Leadership specializing in instructional leadership strategies for Limited English Proficient students; (e) to develop action research reports on LEP student issues at their school sites; (f) to develop four summer conferences for all of the rural districts in the educational service area; (g) to place 50 preservice reading teachers in TRIAD teachers' classrooms for 15 hours of field-based experiences; and (h) to disseminate results. To fulfill the objectives of the grant, it is crucial that the site administrator work closely with the teachers to ensure continuity throughout each district.

Objective 1

Objective 1 seeks to provide 198 clock hours of professional development to teams (triads) of three professionals (reading teachers of LEP students, teachers of LEP students, and administrators) in research-based reading instruction and in mentoring new teachers of LEP students. This objective provides each triad over three long semester terms and a summer session the following staff development courses: (a) research-based reading instruction for LEP students, (b) action research in reading related instruction, (c) advanced research-based reading instruction for LEP students, and (d) curriculum planning and development in reading for LEP students.

Research-Based Reading Instruction for LEP Students is an introductory course consisting of 45 hours, one third of which are field-based on participants' campuses, and the remainder through attendance at workshops conducted by experts in the field of research-based reading. Topics for these workshops include (a) why services for LEP students are critical, (b) first and second language (L1 and L2) program types for LEP students, (c) literacy development for PK-3, and (d) an overview of reading research. The field-based work requires the participants to analyze their district and campus to determine services, program type and curriculum for reading and literacy for LEP students. As the triads complete all assignments for the prolonged professional development, positive changes are anticipated in services to LEP students, teacher attitudes, instruction and curriculum policy regarding LEP students.

Action Research in Reading Related Instruction

This component of the program requires 45 hours of which 15 hours are face-to-face class time and the remaining 30 hours are spent in action research. Topics covered during the class sessions include: (a) an understanding of what action research is, (b) how to conduct action research with LEP students and teachers on the school campus and in the classroom; (c) ethical concerns; (d) how to write a report; and (e) how to use the data to alter policy, procedures, and curriculum. To fulfill the field-based requirement for this course, triads choose a topic related to LEP students' reading instruction.

Advanced Research-Based Reading Instruction for LEP Students is a 45 hour course of which one third is field-based on the participant's campus, could include such topics as (a) research in reading, (b) research in literacy, (c) reading in the content areas, (d) additional needs in terms of research in reading for LEP students, and (e) pedagogical considerations. In the field-based portion of the course, participants are required to conduct 3 mini-staff development sessions with faculty on research-based reading instruction.

Curriculum Planning and Development in Reading for LEP Students is a 45 hour course, of which one-third of the hours are field-based on campus. Topics considered are (a) curriculum auditing, (b) curriculum alignment with LEP standards, and (c) curriculum planning and development. During their field-based work, the triads conduct a curriculum audit and align curriculum and develop new strategies as needed.

Outcome Measures

Each participant logs in to the professional development sessions on the TRIAD web site to clock the 198 hours. Follow-up with the triads is conducted by the grant coordinator to determine application of the information learned on the campus. Course syllabi are reviewed by the directors to determine relevance and inclusion of the standards. Based on the curriculum course, curriculum audits and alignments and revisions conducted by the triads are reviewed by the grant director for accuracy.

Objective 2

Objective 2 provides for mentoring to 78 new bilingual/ESL teachers by the triads trained in each district. Participating triads develop and implement a mentoring program for each new bilingual/ESL teacher on the campus.

Outcome Measures

The 78 mentored teachers are interviewed and observed for application within the classroom regarding information learned from triad members.

Objective 3

Objective 3 provides for the development and implementation of 5 parent training modules per district per triad in research-based reading instruction to enable parents to work with their students at home. Training consists of 5 two-hour modules and reading materials for a 1 plus 1 program (1 parent plus 1 child reading together). Participating triads develop this parent module and submit it to the Project TRIAD director for approval.

Outcome Measures

This objective is measured by (a) completion of 5 parent modules, (b) a Likert Scale effectiveness survey administered to parents regarding the impact of their training, and (c) achievement of students of parents who attended the training is monitored to determine impact.

Objective 4

The fourth objective of Project TRIAD is to apply the equivalent courses (4) to a 12 course (36 hour) Masters Degree in Instructional Leadership with a specialization in research-based reading instruction for LEP students for those triad participants who choose to apply it. The grant will either pay participants to participate for the year or to offer the option of paying tuition toward an Instructional Leadership graduate degree for 4 courses over four semesters.

Outcome Measures

TRIAD directors document the number of students from TRIAD groups who further their education as leaders on campuses in the area of assistance to LEP students.

Objective 5

The purpose of this objective is to develop action research teams in the school districts to address issues related to reading instruction for LEP students. Participants receive instruction during a series of monthly day long workshops on how to conduct action research with LEP students and to have the triads complete an action research project that is publishable online. Action research is intended to alter policy and practice.

Outcome Measures

A total of 117 action research reports are reviewed, discussed, and posted online and presented to local school boards. Each triad produces an action research policy/ procedure report that cites its impact on the field of reading instruction for LEP students.

Objective 6

This objective is to develop four 1-day summer conferences in best practices of reading instruction for LEP students based on the research conducted by the Project TRIAD participants for the school districts' personnel to attend. In addition to presentations by experts in the field of reading instruction for LEP students, the action research reports of the triad members are presented.

Outcome Measures

Registration logs are kept of the attendees to demonstrate interest; evaluation forms are submitted by participants to determine the effectiveness of the workshops.

Objective 7

The purpose of this objective is to place 50 preservice teachers with triad teachers who have been trained in assessment and strategies in reading for LEP students for a 15 hour field-based experience and to encourage them to teach in these rural districts.

Outcome Measures

Fifty preservice teachers are placed in triad teacher classrooms and the number of those teachers who actually serve LEP students in rural districts is documented.

Objective 8

The eighth objective of the grant is to disseminate results of the project through local, state, and national conferences and professional media sources over the course of the grant including: (a) four local summer conferences; (b) three state, and three national conferences; and (c) thirty professional media sources including newspapers, NABE News, journals, etc. Grant participants will apply to make presentations and submit articles for publication regarding their action research projects.

Outcome Measures

The numbers of the dissemination efforts is documented and logged over the course of the grant.

CONCLUSION

Considering what we know about the linguistic needs of English Language Learners, what can we conclude about teaching reading to Limited English Proficient students in rural schools? The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in their professional development program for teachers working with English Language Learners to develop reading skills, identifies some important issues regarding learning to read in a second language: (a) Regardless of the native language, students who grew up in a language rich environment develop a strong foundation for literacy; and (b) many children begin school already knowing a lot about literacy; they've been read to, talked to, and had many experiences with language (CAL, 2004). This may not be the case in many rural communities, so the responsibility for providing a language rich environment falls on the schools. Since they may already be constrained by unqualified personnel and limited resources to provide the necessary programs, this

task may appear overwhelming. Teachers need resources available to them, flexibility to do the job, and staff development for working with non-English speaking students. Limited financial resources make allocating sufficient dollars for teaching ELL students difficult.

In his book *Effective Schools for the Urban Poor*, Ron Edmonds states, "All children are eminently educable, and the behavior of the school is critical in determining the quality of the education" (Edmonds, 1979, p. 20). Language minority students in particular have often been blamed for their underachievement in United States schools. By considering them *difficult* or culturally and linguistically *deprived*, schools have found it easy to absolve themselves of responsibility for the education of these students (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 2003). Edmonds (1979) on the other hand, places the responsibility for quality education squarely in the hands of the school's leader. The matter of establishing a quality program of services to students identified as LEP is not grounded in the size of the program or the number served. It is grounded in excellence only. Being cognizant of and addressing the challenges of English Language Learners in our rural schools can help ensure that indeed No Child is Left Behind.

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Recounting Best Practice: Utilizing Videoconferencing and Blackboard to Teach the Field Experience Seminar

Janell Drone

The Field Experience Seminar (also known as the Internship) is a core curriculum course taught in Education Administration and Supervision. Every aspiring school leader must successfully complete this seminar before the State Certification (to practice as school building or district administrator) is conferred. A Project-Based Activity (PBA) indicating—competence in spheres of the Hunter College Conceptual Framework (HCCF) and; a developed Internship Contract aligned with Instructional Leadership Standards are apex course requirements. Technology proficiency must be incorporated into both. Incorporating technology into these learning experiences—PBA and HCCF and Instructional Leadership Standards—enhance Field Experience and subsequently makes Distance Education an effective teaching and learning strategy. Therefore, utilizing technology to teach Field Experience seminar becomes a measured best practice to advance leadership development.

This chapter contributes to pedagogy and practice in Education Administration and Supervision programs. Primarily the focus of the chapter is on knowledge acquisition, skill development and maintaining a positive disposition (e.g. demonstrated classroom behavior that is consistent with the idea of fairness and the belief that all can learn). The consensus view of research gathered, argues that acquiring best practice in the aforementioned areas—is a reachable goal. But the outcome is best achieved when technology is used to teach the Field Experience seminar.

For purposes of discussion, the chapter explores benefits of Blended learning (e.g. Blackboard and Videoconferencing) as a means of informing, communicating and edifying aspiring leadership development. Recognizing that there is no place for mediocrity in leadership, accessing excellence by any means necessary is the cornerstone aspiration of this chapter. Moreover, the information and ideas offered is for those whose vision is the same.

INTRODUCTION

The overarching goal of the program in Education Administration and Supervision at Hunter College is leadership development. This means that there is an established commitment to empower aspiring leaders to become successful school administrators. An excellent venue to observe authentic leadership development is spotlighted in two program structures: (a) completing a Project Based Activity (PBA) reflective of the Hunter Colleges Conceptual Framework (HCCF) spheres; and (b) demonstrated knowledge of Instructional Leadership Standards that are embedded in the Internship Contract. A demonstrable proficiency with technology including Blackboard preparation is essential to completing Field Experience.

In this chapter data was collected, and will be presented on two Field Experience cohorts for academic years 2005 and 2006 respectively. The difference between each cohort is both—simple and complex but best explained as a procedural change mandated by the Board of Regents for New York State; and its State Certificated requirements.

The decision to end the year long Field Experience (Internship) impacted the 2005 cohort more than it did the

2006 cohort. Because the 2005 cohort entered the program under different state regulations, there was a program policy requiring a Project-Based Activity (PBA) in the Field Experience seminar. When the change went into effect the Field Experience seminar was cut short by one semester. The element of time became a critical variable in what could be accomplished—therefore, the PBA was dropped as a requirement for the 2006 cohort.

The on-line learning experiences for both cohorts (2005 and 2006), continue using Blackboard and Videoconferencing to enhance leadership development. But, instead of developing and discussing an on-line PBA, the 2006 cohorts' on-line experience is connected to their Internship Contract, and Leadership Standards. The activity is equally, an important and demanding Field Experience Exit Criteria. Both cohorts (2005 and 2006) must be competent users of technology in order to succeed. Through it all, demanding competence, professionalism and leadership development with technology is an expected program outcome. These program objective is considered a best practice and will be developed and discussed inter-changeable and comparatively with Distance Education and leadership development.

Moreover, the rationale for studying leadership preparation and technology integration as an effective strategy for developing aspiring leaders is because it invigorates the Field Experience and is an excellent means to self-pace, organize and manage multiple tasks requirements. Evolving from Piaget, Bloom, Gagne' and Vygotsky is a constructivist theory of learning that stresses the importance of experiences, experimentation, problem solving and the construction of knowledge (Picciano, 2005). Through technology and Distance Education, Field Experience is a true symbol of evolving learning. Only in the case of this research “anytime and any place” learning is explored as a means to expand school leadership theory.

Moreover, the research of Neil Rudenstine (1997), a former president of Harvard University, observed that the Internet and other electronic networks allow communications to take place at all hours and across distance. This frame of reference has opened the door to the future of school leadership showing how school administration and leadership preparation programs can be. It points out that Distance Education and Blended learning lessens demands (time-wise) of aspiring leaders. At the same time it increases the quality of leadership development, performance, and task completion. Even so, it concludes Field Experience and leadership development must be a continuous process—utilizing technology to the fullest extent possible.

PBA, HCCF, AND TECHNOLOGY

In Education Administration and Supervision, the Project-Based Activity (PBA) is a recognized structure of best practice—to showcase leadership development. It addresses a specific need identified by both an aspiring leader and the site (school or district) supervisor. Ogawa and Bossert, (1995) work saw social influence as a form of distributed leadership going beyond individuals implying collective agency. The PBA represent distributed leadership between practicing and aspiring leaders because a PBA topic or problem addressed is large in scope – providing an opportunity to address one of the program's exit criteria by:

- Identifying a data documented school or regional need, deficit, goal or objective—(what did you do?)
- Plan and implement a solution strategy or strategies (why did you do it?)
- What did you learn?
- What difference will the project make in the profession?

Ultimately, the PBA provide a unique opportunity for aspiring leaders to locate a problem of need in a designated school setting—then solve or fix.

The Hunter College Conceptual Framework (HCCF) is a school wide standard that emerged as a result of becoming an NCATE accredited institution (2004). The following set of social and political ideologies were adopted to frame how education candidates would matriculate through various programs in the School of Education, at the college. In the Education Administration and Supervision program evidence of meeting HCCF expectations are seen in five spheres:

Professionalism through the performance of real administration and supervisory activities in a real school setting. These experiences will be documented in the Field Experience portfolio, used during the Program Exit Interview, and used during administration employment interviews.

Social Justice through identification of inequities in the practices and processes schools conduct and the design of procedures for removing the inequities.

Creating Caring Learning Environments through assisting teachers at all levels of their development and all students achieve within the school setting to improve their ability to work and learn so that all students achieve at high levels. This also involves the creation of professional learning communities in which teachers assist each other to identify areas of need in their classrooms and strategies to resolve these needs.

Urban Context through learning about, understanding and developing and modifying programs, budgets, and plans to meet the needs of a community involved with their schools.

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions in the course match the exit criteria for the program. Students will demonstrate their abilities to discuss create debate and perform the related knowledge, skills, and disposition.

Demonstrating proficiency through the use of technology including Blackboard has become a signature feature of leadership preparation in the Field Experience seminar. Therefore teaching the Field Experience seminar with this assisted technology (i.e. Blackboard and Videoconferencing) invariably stimulate learning, and enhance the performance of the leadership development program. The Tables 1 and 2 list Blackboard topics posted.

Moreover, by providing the topics and task to be discuss over the course of the semester up-front affords an opportunity to self-pace. By gathering information, collecting thoughts and ideas ahead of time (the scheduled week) enables being ready to respond easier. This does not mean that the exact task to be completed is known. Only the Leadership Standard and the area of interest (PBA) are initially provided. Such information frames the debate for the on-line discussion. Each Leadership Standard is addressed in accordance with the Internship Contract at the building or district site. And the PBA is also connected to a need at the building site or district.

Responding to various topics (e.g. minimally three times per week) arrive with many options that (in some instances) usually prolong a discussion. By pointing and clicking (Course Statistics, Assignments, Calendar—even the Announcement page) a threaded discussion might continue far longer than the required three responses. This is possible due to instant access learning via internet. The internet is a dynamic communications and information resource. Information of all sorts is constantly being added, deleted, and most importantly, shared among millions of people. (Picciano, 2005). Such is not the case a traditional face-to-face format.

Table 1. 2005 Cohort Schedule.

Week of:	Project-Based Activity (PBA) Section Developed
February 2, 2005	Identified Topic/problem to be solved
February 9, 2005	Match Topic to Reviewed literature
February 16, 2005	Refine reference list, delete, add to by borrowing from posted list
February 23, 2005	Draft 1 of PBA (needs description) why is project needed at school site
March 2, 2005	Refine need statement in a two to three paragraph description statement
March 9, 2005	Methodology (population, resources, leadership strategy involved)
March 16, 2005	Discussing hindrance (e.g. what worked, not and what did you have to change/Why? Why not?
March 23, 2005	A Timeline of the project (when/where/how to implement). Who will take your place if you leave?
March 30, 2005	Final conclusions and changes to be made based on the project findings. Study limitations considered—why and why not?
April 6–13, 2005	SPRING BREAK
April 20, 2005	Final Draft of all PBA sections must be posted for all to read and or respond to (on-line)
May 4, 2005	Presentation of process and results of PBA posted on-line. Specific guidelines for this presentation (see handbook).
May 11, 2005	Class ends!

Table 2. 2006 Cohort Schedule.

Week of:	Standard Addressed
February 8, 2006	Standard 5: Parent-Community Involvement and Communication
February 15, 2006	Standard 5: Parent-Community Involvement and Communication
February 22, 2006	Standard 3: Management and Organizational Leadership
March 5, 2006	Standard 3: Management and Organizational Leadership
March 12, 2006	Standard 2: Professional Development
March 19, 2006	Standard 2: Professional Development
March 26, 2006	Standard 4: Student Support Services
April 9–16, 2006	SPRING BREAK
April 23, 2006	Standard 1: Instructional Leadership
April 30, 2006	Standard 1: Instructional Leadership
May 7, 2006	Standard 1: Instructional Leadership
May 14–20, 2006	EXIT INTERVIEWS

Technology and autonomy go hand and hand. In fact, autonomy is a distinct instance of leadership practice (Spillane, 2004). It constitutes a coordinated phenomenon, no element of which can be detached from the other. Why is this so? The answer is that technology (like technique) is a mass instrument designed to expand and disburse information. Thus is a critical factor of rapid response time and the on-line Blackboard discussions.

How others observe and/or decide to join a particular on-line discussion is left to individual discretion and comfort level with ideas presented. This best practice style enable aspiring leaders to be a part of an instant, active, hand-on learning experiences that can be informative and replicated in their schools. Also information ascertained from an on-line discussion can be integrated into leadership development programs' objectives. This is especially so if the information is linked to an authentic resource such as a schools' website, or state report card.

By teaching Field Experience via Blackboard and Videoconferencing the leadership development program at Hunter College—recognize that computer technology is powerful for its enormous information base, and its impact on leadership development. But particularly, the acquisition of knowledge and skill development opportunities afforded to aspiring school leaders—is its largest asset.

Rather than offering Field Experience in the traditional face-to-face lecture format, aspiring leaders are encouraged to become proficient users of technology (e.g. Blackboard). This is an illustrated success of leadership development that is not studied at great length. The process introduced provide a systematic basis for how both the Project-Based Activity (PBA) and the Leadership Standards are linked to Field Experience.

Moreover, on-line developing, collaborating and group problem-solving (as a cohort) is a best practice for of teaching the Field Experience seminar. This method of teaching requires each aspiring leader to respond to a directed task by posting information to a relevant topic (PBA, Leadership Standard etc.).

A weekly task is initiated by a Blackboard facilitator (in this case, the seminar professor). Each member of the cohort must share publicly (posting on Blackboard), research that is currently being conducted at their school site. Members of the cohort are directed to challenge others to explain and clarify positions taken. They are also asked to discuss skills gained through the experience.

Every on-line discussion (PBA and HCCF or Leadership Standard) must be relevant work at the site where PBA and Leadership Standards are embedded in the Internship Contract. Each week a new task appear about a different aspect of research (topic or Standard) explored. Examples of what cohort members were asked to respond to is listed below:

- All aspects of what was done (procedural details and steps)
- The obstacles that to be overcome
- Target population (who was involved)
- The skills employed

How the work was evaluated
Expectations outcome and the result
Scope of limitations

Additionally each cohort member must incorporate minimally three, of the Hunter College Conceptual Framework (HCCF) spheres into the activity or standard being discussed.

The strategy to develop the PBA on-line created an opportunity for every aspiring leader to critically assess posted information. Being engaged and having a say from a distance - about the climate, an event or a school condition that might be different from ones own is critical leadership development. Learning climate was examined by Silins (2000). But a greater emphasis on professional collaboration in the process of school improvement was studied by Leithwood and Jantzi, (1999). It teaches that every school is different and that leaders may not be able to choose the vantage point from where they will lead. Such an experience is likely to empower learning in, and inspire appreciation for conditions consistent with the urban context that may be outside of ones scope of knowledge.

Moreover, using technology to teach Field Experience will broaden leadership development programs on ways to use Blackboard, its applications and information simulations in order to complete seminar tasks related to four major goals:

Communicating information
Access and interpreting information
Creating original research and compositions
Enhancing understanding and problem solving

FIELD EXPERIENCE AND ON-LINE LEARNING

The on-line Field Experience seminar enable aspiring leaders to demonstrate knowledge and skill base - aligned with standards for Instructional Leadership—developed by the School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC); the nine Essential Knowledge and Skills For Effective School Leaders identified by New York State Education Department, New York City Standards for School Leaders and the most current standards for advanced programs in educational leadership developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (ELCC) (Internship Handbook, 2005). Additionally, the Education Administration and Supervision program (at Hunter College) follow the involvement of aspiring leaders in real activities that relate to the work of the school principal, assistant principal or district level administrator.

The Field Experience Seminar has academic rigor entrenched in it completion process. For instance, aspiring school leaders are required to (Internship Handbook, 2005):

Complete (depending on cohort program inception) 200–300 hours of field experience under the mentorship of a site level administrator, and a Hunter College faculty member.
Participate in seminar activities and field work.
Create a log of field activities with weekly reflections.
Create a portfolio to document involvement in those activities.
Design a contract that specifies a schedule of activities related to each area of the standards.

Proficiency in all of the above, is referenced with a technological emphasis, and is assessed by two site observations, a presentation of a Portfolio that documents work completed (e.g. the internship field experience) and lastly, an Oral Exit Interview.

Subsequently, leadership preparation at Hunter College is comprehensive, thorough, and a gradual process—requiring a paradigm shift in attitude and program outlook in order to become a competent school leader. A fundamental change in attitude towards technology is vital for leadership developing and development. Such is the case, even though attitude-driven learning combines various events and delivery media to develop specific behaviors (Kerres & DeWitt, 2003).

Technology in general terms applies to various administrative and instructional applications involving calcu-

lators, overhead projectors, telephones, television, and so forth. It also refers to computer as well as other technologies such as data communications video, and multimedia (Picciano, 2005). Heavy reliance on information technology enhances virtual communication skills and integrates technology use into leadership practice (Brown-Ferrigno, 2004).

The Field Experience seminar has been taught consistently with technology and on-line by this Hunter College professor since spring 2003. But data gathering and analysis on the teaching and learning aspects of Field Experience occurred within the past two years—spring 2005 and 2006—respectively. A recent Field Experience survey was administered to aspiring leaders currently taking the seminar. Specifically, each cohort was asked complete a survey. They were asked to comment on their learning style preference (i.e. cohort work, face-to-face, on-line, or blended learning) while completing Field Experience.

Eighty percent of the spring 2005 cohort indicated their preference for Blended learning among other methods (Drone, 2006). Twelve percent wished for on-line (Blackboard exclusively) and 8% said they desired face-to-face learning. Interesting! But 84% of the cohort (Spring 2006) indicated that they preferred Blended learning with videoconferencing and Blackboard. Twelve percent on-line (Blackboard) and 4% still need the traditional face-to-face method. What makes the desire for face-to-face teaching so interesting is that the option was presented but there were no takers—presumably meeting four times a semester is more attractive than 12–15 meeting.

Further, the 4% increase in Blended learning in just one year is significant and equally interesting because the number of aspiring leaders completing the survey was a smaller cohort sample (i.e. 2005 cohort member = 40, and 2006 cohort members = 28). Further, members of the (2006) Field Experience cohort reported that Blended Learning “advanced knowledge as to how we can communicate knowledge and success . . . by sharing strategies and methodologies [from the] 21st century global society”. Another participant called it “great” and “an enjoyable process of interactive learning”.

THE FIELD EXPERIENCE AND 80% ON-LINE TEACHING METHOD

The Field Experience seminar is taught in an “eighty-twenty” teaching schedule. This means that 80% of the Field Experience Seminar is taught on-line using the Blackboard application. 20% of Field Experience is taught face-to-face using videoconferencing to inspire leadership development. There are only four face-to-face meetings (usually the first Wednesday of the month) during the semester.

As presented in Table A and Table B (page 4 and 5), an on-line discussion takes place weekly (save for school breaks). This means that aspiring leaders must log on to Blackboard each week. Since the typical semester is 12–15 weeks, and they are required to post minimally three times per week—each aspiring leader would post responses to 36 to 45 tasks over the semester. However, with easy access to technology the number of responses exceeds the recommended count by far each week. A quick count of total responses posted thus far in the semester shows that most or 96% of the 2006 cohort responded over 50 times. There are still six weeks left. But at the same time last year (2005) only 90% of this cohort had exceeded the recommended or required responses to tasks posted on Blackboard.

The weekly on-line (80%) discussion is where topics relevant to the Field Experience are discussed. Once a task is posted all cohort members are required to respond a minimum of three times over the course of a week. The task is posted on Sunday and the on-line discussion ends the following Saturday. A list of topics discussed each week of the semester is placed in easy to access spots in Blackboard such as: (a) Course Information section, (b) the Blackboard Announcement page, (d) Course Documents and; (e) the Blackboard Calendar. Weekly e-mails are sent announcing new tasks. Additionally every aspiring leader receives a hard copy and an on-line handbook. It tells where all information can be found. The information is the same in hard and electronic copy.

FIELD EXPERIENCE AND 20% FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING

Videoconferencing

Twenty percent of the Field Experience seminar is presented in four (4) face-to-face meetings. Usually the meetings take place on the first Wednesday in the month. During the face-to-face meeting invaluable informa-

tion is presented by way of Videoconferencing (e.g. guest speakers, programs updates, graduation requirements and other information). Videoconferencing transpires through the use of analog or digital video technology to connect multiple parties simultaneously in a conference where participants can see and hear each other. (Picciano, 2005). Point-to-point video conferencing refers to a two-party conference. Multipoint videoconferencing to a multiple (more than two) party conference.

Videoconferencing was introduced to the Field Experience Seminar in 2005. It was introduced as a means of convenience for students who had a class ten blocks away from the scheduled classroom assigned to this professor. Since Field Experience is usually taught in the 7:10 pm slot, students (trying to complete the program early) took a 4:30 pm course (doubling courses is common) and would have to travel from Hunter Colleges' 68th Street to the School of Social Work Building on East 79th Street within 10 minutes. Traffic, walking, subway or taxi (given New York City traffic) made the commute impossible to begin or end the class with that dilemma.

Trying to support students and ease the colleges' space problem the professor engaged in the distance learning experiment. Conquering space and time—a daunting venture in the not too distant past—is becoming more commonplace as computers and video technologies bring learning virtually any place on earth at any time (Picciano, 2005). But people must be willing to cooperate.

So in the case of introducing Distance Learning in the Field Experience—the intentions were admirable, and technology was available. However, when students saw that the 68th street Distance Learning lab was open too many (e.g. 21 instead of 10) took the easy way and went to the 68th street site. The only problem with this

Table 1. Videoconference and Face-to-Face Teaching (2005 Cohort).

Videoconference Platform	Mode of Communication
1. Face-to-Face Guest Lecture Inter-departmental February, 2005 68th and 79th Street Distance Learning Labs Seminar professor at 79th Street)	A video tape was made and presented of Dr. Shyrel Graves—explaining the process of the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for submitting proposals for review. The Project-Based Activity (PBA) required IRB approval. Dr. Graves was later signed on as guest on Blackboard. Seminar students were invited to submit questions concerning IRB and their PBA required project. The lecture was not interactive.
2. Face-to-Face Distance Education teaching between 68th and 79th street Distance Learning Lab March, 2005 Seminar professor (at 79th Street)	Introduced a video on school violence. The students were to review as part of the state certification process of school safety information. (Dr. Drone). The presentation was interactive between the professor and between students in the 68th and 79th street campuses.
3. Face-to-Face Distance Education Guest Speaker Program Co-Chair April, 2005 (Seminar professor at 68th street).	The Program Co-Chair (Dr. Janet Patti) was video taped and sent a message to inform students of Emotional Competencies questionnaires. The presentation was not interactive.
4. Face-to-Face Distance Education Guest Speaker Program Co-Chair May, 2005 (Seminar professor at 68th street).	The Program Co-Chair (Dr. Marcia Knoll) was video taped and sent a message to inform students of Exit Interviews, Portfolios and Graduation Requirements. The presentation was not interactive.

Table 2. Videoconference and Face-to-Face Teaching (2006 Cohort).

Videoconference Platform	Mode of Communication
5. Face-to-Face Guest Lecture School of Education—Invitation only March 1, 2006 Lang Recital Hall, Hunter College 68th street	Richard Rothstein, a noted Researcher and writer from the Economic Policy Institute was invited to speak to the School of Education Faculty on his research on Class and Schools. The lecture was videoconference to the 79th street Distance Learning lab where members of 2005 and 2006 watched the lecture. It was a real time but not an Interactive conference. (Seminar professor and cohort 2005 and 2006) at 79th street Distance Learning Lab.
6. Face-to-Face Guest Lecture March 29, 2006 Fairfax County, VA and 79th street Distance Learning Lab (79th street Distance Learning lab)	Dr. Mel Riddile the Met Life/NASSP Principal of the Year presented a lecture on his achievement and success at J.Stuart High School in Virginia. It was an extended interactive and real time presentation. Dr. Riddile made the presentation interactive asking students to show hands and presented questions about their school asking them to compare and contrast. During the question/answer discussion 7 students presented questions—and Dr. Riddile responded.
7. Face-to-Face Guest Lecture April 26, 2006 (68th Street Distance Learning lab)	Dr. Janet Patti program Co-Chair will appear. The experience will be interactive.
8. Face-to-Face Guest Speaker May 3, 2006	Dr. Marcia Knoll, program Co-Chair will be video taped with information on graduation requirements, Portfolio and Oral Exit Interview. The experience will not be interactive.

change: (a.) limited space, (b.) technical difficulties made hearing impossible for the first forty minutes at 68th street. So what initially began as exciting and cutting-edge teaching ended in chaos?

According to Spillane (2005a) leadership can come to pass through four mechanisms—including crisis. Since it was the first of four face-to-face meetings there was time to make necessary adjustments. Including instituting bi-monthly meetings. Still there were no takers – coming to campus 4 times as oppose to 12–15 is better by any standard.

Prudent planning is required in videoconferencing. This means that a backup and alternative activity must be provided in the event of system failures or technical difficulties as experience at the first face-to-face meeting spring 2005. The research advice that for widely dispersed student audiences, the instructor will need to have the assistance of facilitators to answer questions (Picciano, 2005). At the first face-to-face meeting two Adjunct professors were in the 68th street lab—but did not know what to do with adult but child like behavior. Any simple assurance would have helped assuage anxiety. But the room was overcrowded and hot even in February—too many adults in a small space spell disaster!

Compared to other distance learning technologies Picciano 2005, saw videoconferencing as an expensive, complex, and evolving technology that will test the administrative and technical expertise of most educational institutions. Such is/was not the case with videoconferencing and the Field Experience seminar. In fact it was the opposite. Other than working out the space problem and the first experience—videoconferencing proved to be inexpensive and highly informative.

Tables 1 and 2 describe how videoconferencing has been used to teach the Field Experience Seminar.

Videoconferencing is competency-driven learning that combines performance support tools with knowledge management resources and mentoring (Valiathan, 2002). This learning method is consistent with the operating definition of Blended Learning, the epistemological and pedagogical bases for utilizing technology to teach Field Experience as Distance Education.

As the research is a work in progress data on the videoconference and the field experience can not be presented at this time. However it will be available to discuss at the NCPEA conference in August.

FIELD EXPERIENCE, BLENDED LEARNING, AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Recent cutting-edge technology and on-line learning systems (e.g. WebCT, Blackboard and Videoconferencing) accentuates Blended learning and Distance Education as an ideal mechanism to empower aspiring leadership skills. Blended learning is widely used in institutions of higher education particularly when they have embraced technology in general, but especially distance education (Lombard and Ditton, 1997). Blended learning has been observed to combine or mix modes of web-based technology (e.g. line virtual classroom, self-paced instruction, collaborative learning, streaming video, audio and text) to accomplish an educational goal (Driscoll, 2001). The didactical bases of this learning are numerous, but most noted: quick access to knowledge, pedagogical richness, social interactions, easy revision, personal agency and cost effectiveness.

Other researchers have found the best blended learning teaching practices and strategies related to Instructional Methods: instructors that know how to handle the e-learning component (Blackboard or WebTC, e-mail, discussion board, forums etc. (Osguthorp, Graham, 2003). In the Field Experience seminar, the total scope of Blackboard application was used to inform, engage and guide the on-line discussion. But the Course Document section and digital drop features were excellent performance enhancers for posting announcements as well as in tracking, retrieving, critiquing and returning student work timely.

Further research by Osguthorp and Graham (2003) describe best blended learning teaching practices and strategies related to Instructional Results, including: organization of every learning outcome on time, flexibility with assignments and feedback to student requests, questions and doubts. In Field Experience seminar, scheduled weekly discussion commences and ends as presented on day one. This means at the very first face-to-face orientation session of the semester. As a result of this clarity, weekly on-line discussion proceeded as planned. Additionally, the advanced list of weekly topics remained posted in three places: (1) course document, (2) the announcement board and (3) weekly emails informing when a new task was posted. These locations are obvious spots to post information that keeps the on-line discussion operating smoothly. Likewise, respondents are engaged and abreast. It is also great fun to reward highly interactive discussants with an occasional surprise – by encouraging all to “take a break” in order to catch up with other Field Experience activities.

The research of Edwards, McLacus, Brieres, & Robs (2004) describe the delivery of distance education. But as early as 1993, Astin (1993) saw it as highly interactive and engaging in any education or training environment in terms of the quality of the learning experience. Since preparing aspiring leaders is recognized as a standard of quality Education Administration and Supervision programs that is here to stay, it is imperative that skills to access information within a specific pedagogical framework that creates opportunities for collaborations be seen as—a best practice.

That said, consider the following Distance Education story that transpired—spring (2005). At the outset, one aspiring leader (also a high school Dean) was invited to chaperon a student activity in Tokyo, Japan. In New York City, and at Hunter College the professor accessed Blackboard from her Harlem, New York residence and posted a weekly task for the week. This task was retrieved from the Blackboard discussion board, responded to and posted from a hotel lobby in Tokyo Japan—as if was sent from a local New York City address. Based on location alone (e.g. Tokyo, Japan, Harlem, New York and Hunter College) is the best example of Distance Education and learning without borders imaginable.

Because learning takes place in spite of time zones, cultural or class distinctions this is the best illustration of technology—as global equalizer, thereby making it a best method to develop effective school leaders. A new global wave of principal preparation and development programs spawned during the late 1990s. Preparation for this particular role has been explicitly linked to training in the United States (Gewirtz, 2003; Hallinger, 2003, Murphy, 2002; Murphy & Shipman, 2003; Strichez, 2001a, 2001b.), the United Kingdom (Balam, 2003; Southworth, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003) Singapore (Cong, Scott, & Low, 2003) Hong Kong (Lam, 2003) and Australia (Davis, 2003).

This documented evidence is proof that there are few if any barriers in Distance Education when a student is driven to learn. Indeed, the concept of student-centered learning has become popular for all forms of education, distance or otherwise, but is especially appropriate when a student needs to take on a greater responsibility for

their learning, as was the case when doing so from a distance like—Japan. That said, the Field Experience is an interactive arena for every aspiring leader to showcase their technological ability.

Skills manifest themselves through behavior—usually complex behavior appropriately applied in the context of the situation. However, developing skill in any endeavor requires breaking the broad task into its component parts, practicing each component part, receiving feedback, adjusting and eventually integrating all of the component behaviors in the performance of a broader task. Skill dimensions are component parts of the broader task of effective school leadership.

In early 2004, the National Association of Secondary School Principals designed and promoted a manual for training the 21st Century Principal with individual professional skills assessments tools. Later that same year (2004) this peer/self assessment model—in particular the 360 Assessment Survey was incorporated in teaching the Field Experience. It was an invaluable process that enhanced every aspiring leader with self awareness. Gaining new perspectives about the principalship and developing new insights about school leadership are desired outcomes of the professional development initiative (Brown-Ferrigno, 2004).

Educational Leadership is composed of setting instructional direction, teamwork, and sensitivity (NASSP, 2004), and using Project Based Learning to integrate technology is an excellent means to show it. Such was demonstrated extensively at the 5th Annual Faculty Best Practice Showcase Faculty-to-Faculty Effective Practices: 'Integrating Technology into Teaching and Learning' (New Jersey State Education Department, 2004).

Among the best practices papers presented were: Using Project Based Learning to Integrate Digital Technology (Gubacs, 2004); Interacting with Students and Blackboard in a Large Class (Bredlau, 2004); Videoconferencing from the Rainforest with K-12 (Timpone, 2004); and Using Distance Learning Techniques in WebCT for Documentary Study (Passerini, 2004) were among the topics and presentations listed. In all there were three tracks of presentations in Sciences/Mathematics/Business, Humanities and a General Section. Ten best practice papers were presented in each of the three tracks. There was not a single Education Administration or School Leadership presentation listed at the conference. This is all the more reason why a leadership development best practice for aspiring school leaders is needed.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Instrument

A Questionnaire research methodology was used for collecting and analyzing data. In developing an instrument that accurately reflected Videoconferencing and Blackboard (Blended learning) as effective best practices to teach the Field Experience seminar, the researcher incorporated criteria from the School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLCC) the nine Essential Knowledge and Skills for Effective School Leaders identified by New York State Education Department, New York City Standards for School Leaders and the most current standards advanced for programs in educational leadership developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (ELCC).

The information gathered was then aligned with expected leadership outcomes of the Field Experience seminar. That included a meticulous look at the Exit Criteria of the Education Administration and Supervision. Special attention was given to the Project-Based Activity and its alignment with the Hunter College Conceptual Framework, as well as the Leadership Standards embedded in the Internship Contract. This information was put in a contextual framework of a Field Experience Comprehensive Survey and administered to two different cohorts of aspiring leaders. There were two surveys administered to each cohort (e.g. 2005 and 2006).

POPULATION

The population for the study included all aspiring leaders enrolled in the Field Experience Seminar in 2005 (N=40) and 2006 (N=28). The survey was distributed at the end of each Face-to-Face meeting. Even though the 4 Face-to-Face meetings were mandatory if a student missed they were allowed to view the taped video and complete the survey. Additionally, the survey was linked to Blackboard so it could be completed on-line. The course statistics section of Blackboard was assessed for student response, task completion of PBA and HCCF integration, and the Leadership Standards embedded in the Internship Contract.

RESULTS

Data analysis is inclusive at the present time. However, responses to the survey questions on teaching Field Experience with technology received an overwhelming high rating that the method increased their knowledge based, advanced their technological skills and increased their ability to communicate with technology. 100 % of those surveyed answered for instance, that “videoconference had advanced or limited their knowledge as an aspiring leader”? Wrote that videoconference “advanced” their knowledge.

Conversely, respondents reported that Blackboard was demanding and that they felt driven to compete (going beyond the expected) 3 weekly responses because they felt obligated to respond to information posted—especially if it contradicted their belief. Although the results hold implications for interactive videoconferencing and Blackboard as the ideal strategy to teach the Field Experience, the importance of information presented (e.g. graduation requirements, school violence and Richard Rothstein’s study on Class and Schools) made the non-interactive videoconference equally informative.

Moreover, this research indicates that videoconferencing is an easy and inexpensive way to conduct professional development anywhere. Olson (2000), Ford (1999) and Potter (1997) research in the area highlighted the need for improving the quality of professional development with technology. In this regard, *Recounting Best Practice: utilizing Videoconference and Blackboard to Teach the Field Experience Seminar* advances their research.

Further research should (1) Expand the research to include best practice between interactive and non-interactive videoconferencing to include the top two or three most frequently used model for leadership at their school. (2) Augment the research to include an independent analysis of the effectiveness of blackboard without videoconferencing. (3) Broaden the research to include the perceptions of guest speakers’ video taped and live (interactive and non-interactive) for personal preference (4) Expand the research to include the perceptions of professional development activity benefit for designing and delivery via videoconference between schools and districts in New York City (urban center) and Suburban district (5) Examine the frequency of use and efficacy of videoconferencing and Blackboard for professional development activities relative to each model, and 6.) Examine the excessive task responding to posted topics on Blackboard.

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Are You Talking too Much? Considerations for Best Practice

Michael B. Gilbert

Students have preferences about how they receive information. Most instructors provide verbal information. If there is a mismatch between delivery and intake preferences, learning can be confounded.

Educators—particularly, educational leaders or administrative aspirants—are decidedly intrinsic in their learning styles. Those individuals who are more logical and thought-oriented tend to listen more effectively. The implications are that instructors, who overuse the auditory mode, might be creating an environment where some students will get into distress and seek negative ways to get their needs met. More positively, instructors need to shift their delivery styles to assure an inviting learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers see students as ready receivers of what the teachers have to offer in the way they structure classroom activities. They typically deliver lessons using the same preferred structure their instructors used to teach them, and they presume their students will accept the information in the way they have delivered it. If these students have learning styles that are much like their instructors' style of delivery, then the instructors and students are well matched. The students will be motivated, and they will move through the various learning activities generally unimpeded.

But for many students, the instructor's strategies and methods do not match their own preferred learning style. Students who are not motivated by their instructors, by learning, or by life in general do all in their power to interact in ways to get their needs met. In the pre-collegiate arena, these students often may be characterized as at-risk when, in fact, their base personality types and their needs are very different from their instructors' types and needs. Successful learning relies on the teacher's ability to connect the subject matter with the student, regardless of learning style.

One aspect of managing a student successfully is related to whether the student and the teacher are "connecting" along open doorways of communication. If there is miscommunication, we can predict that negative coping strategies will be used by both the teacher and the student. These negative coping strategies are correlated to the personality part the individuals are using and the positive energy they have available. (Knaupp, n. d., p. 8)

When instructors' own psychological needs are not met, they usually deal with students who do not conform to their expectations in negative ways. When students do not get their needs met, they usually fall into predictable distressed behavior to get what they need—with or without their conscious awareness. If this happens, then communication is impeded. (A related consideration is the student's ability to comprehend and apply the concepts being taught. This hinges on student aptitude.)

Positive communication is a key to student learning. The heart of communication is centered on connecting

with others. This interaction is best defined as one person comprehending the message another is attempting to convey. Acknowledging that understanding is a mark of best practice for instructors and the students with whom they must communicate. The key to this understanding is listening effectively. The model is simple, but the practice is difficult.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As noted by Gilbert (1989), listening occupies a predominant place in most classroom instruction—far in excess of the approximate 50 % non-instructional use noted by Rankin, Nichols, Steil, and others. He initiated a study to determine how well educators perform the skill they require most students to use 65 to 90 % of classroom time. Additionally, the research focused on whether some types of educators listened more effectively than others. It was presumed that those educators who are more withdrawn and intrinsically motivated (called Workaholics and Persisters by Kahler [1982, 1988]) would listen better than other educator types.

An ancillary purpose was to document what patterns—perceptual and motivational—predominate with educators. A corollary problem was to determine how able educators are to interact with others, especially those unlike themselves. These aspects would suggest how likely educators are to adapt to others.

In their classrooms, instructors set the standard for student expectations and invite students to conform. Yet, not every student is comfortable with this prescription. Students have differing learning styles and ways of processing information (Barbe & Swassing, 1979; McCarthy, 1980; Gregorc, 1982; Gardner, 1983). Personality characteristics also may describe different preferences (Myers & Briggs, 1943; 1976; 1985; DeBono, 1985). In most of these models, one or several aspects of personality are used to depict an individual and suggest that people function in life and in learning situations with the manifestations of those characterizations. (Chart 1 shows the comparative personality indicators of some of the major models.)

Using Kahler's (1982) Process Communication Model (described below) to identify personality types and preferences, Gilbert (1994) reported the relationship between the interaction energy (the ability to interact with people who have other personality preferences) and performance (grades) of students. This relationship was a comparison of student personality type and instructor-designated grades. If one interprets a grade (criterion-ref-

Chart 1. Comparative Personality Indicators.

Kahler	Myers/ Briggs	Gregorc	DeBono	McCarthy	Barbe/Swassing	Gardner
Reactor	E*FJ	CA	Red Hat	Style One	Visual	Interpersonal
Workaholic	*TJ	CS	Black Hat	Style Two	Auditory	Logical—Mathematical
Persister	*TJ	CS	Blue Hat	Style Two	Auditory	Spatial; Linguistic
Dreamer	I*TP	CR	White Hat		Kinesthetic	Intrapersonal
Rebel	EN*P	AR	Green Hat	Style Four	Kinesthetic	Musical; Bodily— Kinesthetic
Promoter	*NT*	CR	Yellow Hat	Style Three	Kinesthetic	Bodily—Kinesthetic

Myers-Briggs Identifiers: E= Extraverted; F= Feeling; I= Introverted; J= Judging; N= Intuitive; P= Perceptive; T= Thinking

Gregorc Delineators: A= Abstract; C= Concrete; R= Random; S= Sequential

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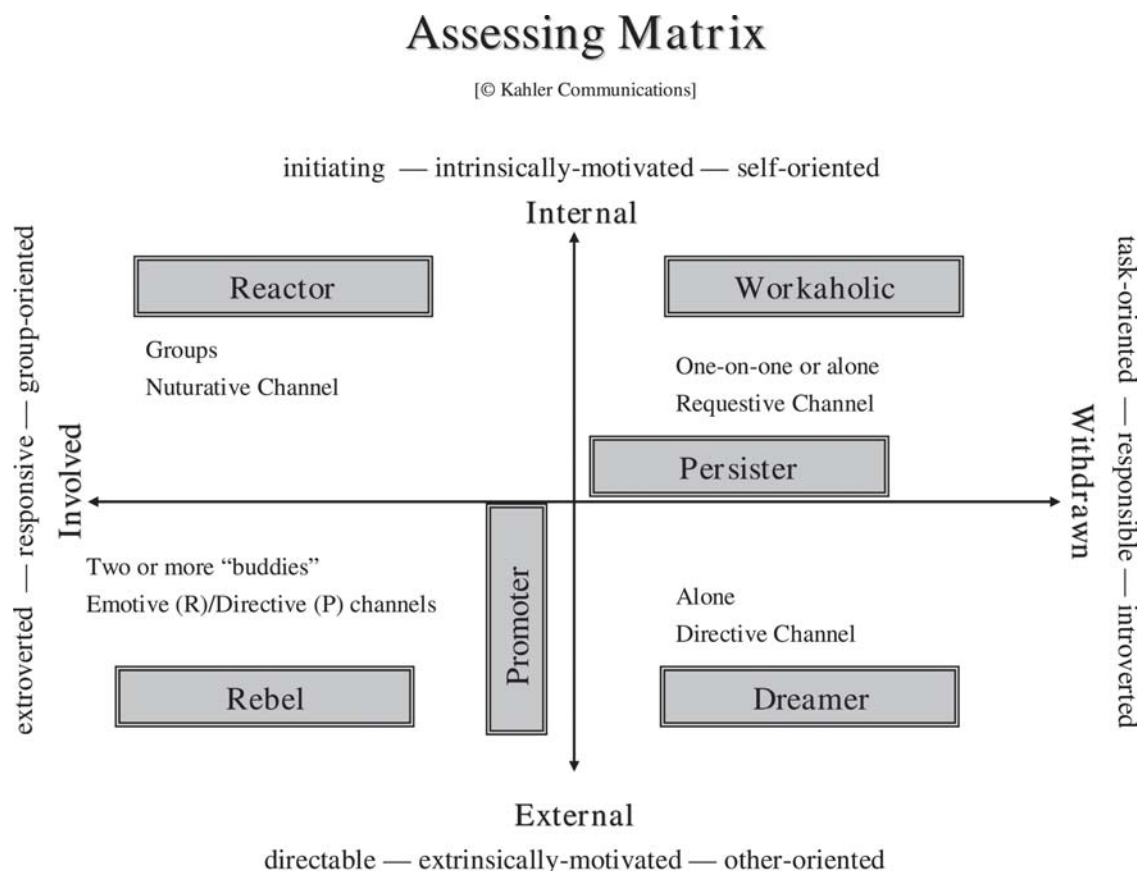
Table 1. Correlations of Interaction Energy with Student Grade-Point Average.

Personality Type	
Reactor	0.4101
Workaholic	0.3660
Persister	0.3591
Dreamer	0.3396
Rebel	0.0889
Promoter	-0.2496

erenced performance) as the student's ability to meet the instructor's expectations, it is not surprising that those who are most like the instructor will fare particularly well. Table 1 shows the significant correlations ($p < .05$) (Gilbert, 1994).

This shows a higher correlation of grades with the personality types of most instructors (see below). Those students who have a lower or negative relationship to grades may prefer a kinesthetic environment, something not readily available in many classrooms. [An observation: lack of success in the pre-collegiate arena may winnow the pool that chooses to explore post-secondary education. This may mean that fewer students who prefer learning kinesthetically will choose to consider colleges or universities for their ongoing instructional needs.]

The Process Communication Model (Kahler, 1982) places six personality types in one of four quadrants on an Assessing Matrix (Figure 1), the two axes of which describe continua from *Involved* to *Withdrawn* and *Intrinsically* to *Extrinsically Motivated*. Teacher types tend to be more intrinsically motivated, spanning the full range from being involved to withdrawn. Poor-performing (at-risk) students fall into the quadrant that describes them mostly as involved and extrinsically motivated. Those types that had the weakest correlations between In-

**Figure 1.**

teraction Energy and Grades must get their needs met positively to stay out of distress: Rebels need playful contact, and Promoters need incidence (lots of activities in short periods of time with quick payoffs). Their main preferred intake mode is kinesthetic, which their intrinsically motivated teachers provide on a limited basis.

Another study focusing on aspects of Process Communication showed similar results: “. . . a student’s grade is significantly affected by the student’s personality type base . . .” (Wallin, 1992, p. iii). Teachers trained in Process Communication may positively affect student performance through understanding student needs and preferences better (Hawking, 1995).

Learning to listen carefully and critically are key aspects of improved student involvement. H. A. Murray’s 1938 work, *Explorations in Personality* (cf. Pierce, 1994), suggested important concepts:

. . . personal needs, defined as motivational personality characteristics, represent tendencies to move in the direction of certain goals, whereas (the classroom environment) provides an external situational counterpart that supports or frustrates the expression of internalized personality needs. Therefore, situational variables found in the classroom environment may account for a significant amount of behavioral variance. (p. 38)

Flexibility in environmental and instructional strategy provides ways in which all learners can be accessed (i.e., motivated). Subscribing to this approach allows instructors to explode one of the long-standing myths: “You can’t let them move around; they are too disruptive” (Pope, 1994, p. 7). Moving away from traditional patterns by recognizing different learner needs gives instructors a plethora of approaches—and permission to use them (even in preparing educational administrators).

Many educators limit the ways in which they offer and process information. Sometimes even good instructors may assume mistakenly that teaching strategies that worked previously for their students will work with everyone. Educators must listen carefully and collaboratively to communicate successfully (Wilmore, 1995). Knowing how to accommodate different patterns and perceptions expands the interaction effectiveness most educators seek.

Kahler (1982) suggested that each person has an individual structure of personality types—a *base*, the strongest part, and each of five other personality types in decreasing strength. Each personality type has character strengths, psychological (motivational) needs, communication preferences, and predictable patterns and behaviors that occur when one is in distress.

Educator Types

Educators tend to predominate with three personality types described by the *Process Communication Model* (PCM) (Kahler, 1982): Reactors (“*feelers*”), Workaholics (“*thinkers*”), and Persisters (“*believers*”). The probable reasons people choose education as a profession may explain this array. In the strongest part of their personalities, they are *compassionate, sensitive, and warm* (Reactors) and want to help others; they are *logical, responsible, and organized* (Workaholics) and can structure learning activities in sequences, in a timely fashion, and in rational ways; or they are *conscientious, dedicated, and observant* (Persisters) and understand what they believe is valuable and important to teach and be learned.

The PCM contends that each of us has a unique personality structure, which is depicted as a six-story building. The first floor is our base personality, observable by six months of age. The order of the remaining five floors is set by age seven. Each successively higher floor is less “furnished” than those below. This furnishing relates to the amount of relative energy available to each person in those aspects of personality.

One will note that the bands on each successively higher floor are equal to or less than the floor beneath. This arrangement may be seen as diminishing energy or ability to interact with other individuals who have that personality type. For example, if I have 100% of the available energy on my Workaholic floor, I am fully furnished and will have no difficulty in interacting with Workaholics. If I have only 60% on my Rebel floor, however, I will have limited energy to interact with those individuals who are *spontaneous, creative, and playful* and who need contact, the more playful the better. Also, in order for me to get to my Rebel floor, I have to call my “elevator”—the psychological vehicle I use to go from one floor to another in my personality structure. If I am in distress, it will be almost impossible for me to go to a floor where I have little energy. In other words, I will find it difficult, if not impossible, to interact with Rebels in ways they would prefer—mostly, playfully.

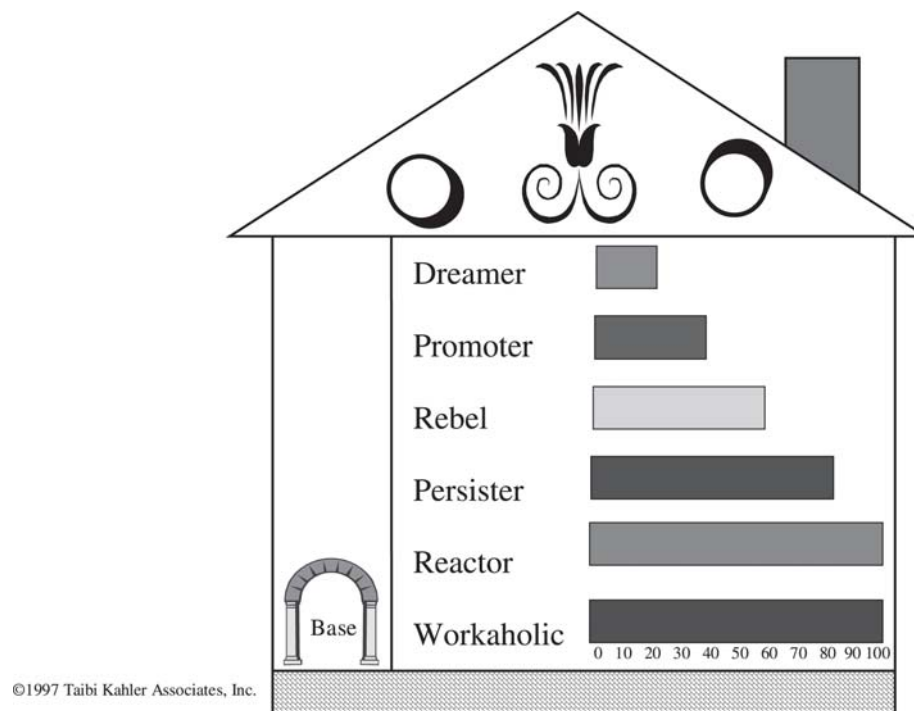


Figure 2. Sample personality condominium.

Phase

A unique feature of the *PCM* is Phase. This describes that aspect of personality where one attempts to fulfill needs—one's motivation. This motivation may be described by one's Base (33% of the time) or in movement to the next higher floor (Phase change) of the personality structure (67% of the time). Ninety-nine percent of those who experience a Phase change do so as a result of long-term distress with and resolution of a particular life issue (Kahler, 1997). Interestingly, this evolution occurs with or without one's awareness. These life issues are as follows for the six *PCM* Personality Types:

<u>Personality Type</u>	<u>Issue for Phase Change</u>
Reactor	Anger
Workaholic	Grief
Persister	Fear
Dreamer	Self-Confidence
Rebel	Self-Love
Promoter	Abandonment/Bonding

Educators tend to be largely intrinsically motivated. More than 90% have perceptual preferences of communicating through their emotions, thoughts, or beliefs (Base designations for Reactors, Workaholics, and Persisters). These same preferences are seen in only 65% of the North-American population. Generally, the remainder of this broader group (35%) prefers to view the world through their reactions (likes and dislikes), actions, or reflections (designations for Rebels, Promoters, and Dreamers). Educators tend not to offer instruction to appeal to those preferences; rather they stay with what is most familiar to them (Gilbert, 2005). (See Figure 3)

Again, the concept of Phase is unique to the Process Communication Model and adds to its comprehensiveness. One's Phase is the part of the personality structure where one is motivated under normal conditions. Educators (more than 80%) tend to draw their motivation predominantly from the intrinsic orientation of Reactor, Workaholic, or Persister personality types—needing *recognition for person/sensory satisfaction*, *recognition for good work/time structure*, or *recognition for valuable contributions/conviction* to stay positive in interactions with others.

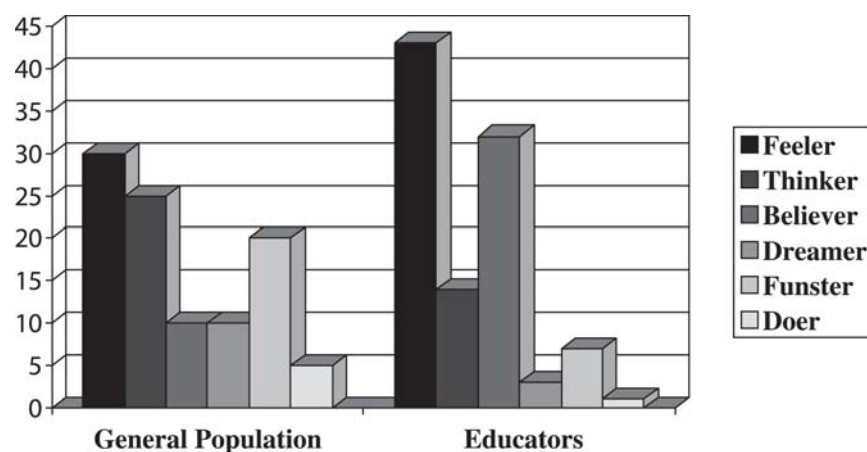


Figure 3. Distribution of Base Personality Types.

The general population (more than one-third) draws motivation from extrinsic sources (Gilbert, 2005). What this means is that educators have lower energy levels in the more extrinsic parts of their personalities. It would be difficult for them to find a lot of energy to interact with those who need *contact*, *incidence* (lots of action with quick payoffs in short periods), and *solitude* (Rebel, Promoter, and Dreamers personality types, respectively). (See Figure 4).

IMPLICATIONS

Listening is the predominant instructional delivery mode, but most educators have had little or no formal training in learning and teaching the *skill* of listening (Gilbert, 1988; 1989). In this age of visual sensory bombardment via computers, television, and other electronic devices, the preference for visual input may exceed what were previous patterns (Barbe & Swassing, 1979). This preference and others may challenge the instructor to find effective ways to deliver concepts and information, especially when confronted by individuals who may prefer to learn more extrinsically (cf. Gilbert, 1999).

People who have a strong ability to think (as opposed to feel, believe, etc.) appear to be the best listeners (Gilbert, 2005). If learners follow the same patterns found by Gilbert, thought-oriented students (Workaholics) will be most effective in taking in factual information by listening. Reactors will need encouragement to look past the literal information. Dreamers will need to be directed to focus on particular aspects of messages to listen effectively.

If Persisters are to listen effectively, they may need to be given *time* to filter messages through their belief systems. Rebels and Promoters will have to be motivated to listen, since it is likely they prefer to learn kinestheti-

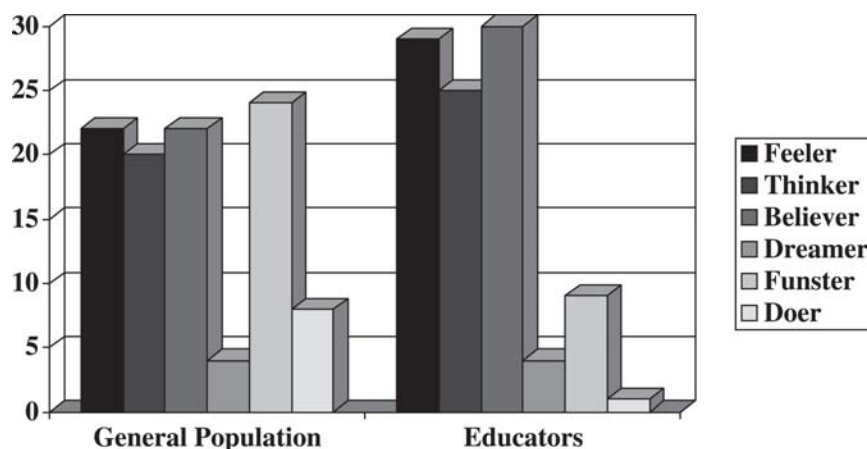


Figure 4. Distribution of Phase Personality Types.

cally. This means these students can *shift* their learning preferences *only* if they meet their *contact* and *incidence* needs first and positively.

Educators should be sensitive to potential problems in overusing the auditory mode to present material. While oral presentation might be preferable for controlling classroom activities and for other reasons, it might also foster distress in those learners who prefer to take in information visually or kinesthetically.

One may ask, “How will I know if I am not meeting my students’ needs?” This speaks to interactional needs, not necessarily learning needs. Table 2 lists the warning signs that Kahler (1982) asserted. He said that failure to fulfill needs leads to distress.

An example might be someone in Persister phase with whom the instructor has disagreed on a point of opinion or value. Not having his conviction accepted or acknowledged would lead the individual into a crusading posture about the importance of his position or the unimportance or untenability of opposing positions.

Each personality phase has predictable distress behaviors. When an instructor sees any of the distress patterns (warning signs), he or she should pay attention. The distress may not be coming from the class activities, but the student will be limited in his or her openness to what is transpiring.

An instructor may try to meet every student’s learning needs, but, in reality, not every lesson lends itself to a full range of teaching strategies. Instead, expanding teaching styles and engaging students productively may be the achievable goals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEST PRACTICE

If those who offer programs in educational administration and leadership are typical of educators in general, *best practice* would suggest that the following occur:

1. Understand your basic personality structure, what motivates you, and what happens when you do not get your needs met.
2. Know your strengths and acknowledge those areas in which you have room to grow.
3. Accept that all students do not necessarily prefer to learn in the way you teach, especially if it does not encompass more than one strategy.
4. Understand that students whose needs are not met—either in or outside of the classroom—will demonstrate predictable patterns of distress.
5. Consider expanding your instructional strategies to accommodate the needs of your students. It will allow them to learn more easily; however, be careful that you, too, get your needs met. Expanding your instructional strategies takes a lot of energy, and you must be in a positive frame of mind to be effective.

For example, those students, who are data- and opinion-oriented (Workaholics and Persisters), will thrive with lecture and discussion that allows them to reveal what they know and what they value. Group activities and

Table 2. Warning Signs.

PersonalityPhase	Need	First-degree Distress	Second-degree Distress
Reactor Workaholic	Recognition of Self; Sensory Recognition of Work; Time structure	Overadapting Failure to delegate	Invites criticism Is critical of apparent lack of responsibility
Persister	Recognition of Work; Conviction	Focus on what’s wrong	Preaches; crusades
Dreamer	Solitude	Inertia	Appears shy and with- drawn
Rebel Promoter	Contact Incidence	Appearance of confusion Withdrawal of support	Blames Manipulates; sets up nega- tive drama

projects will work best for those who are oriented strongly to people (Reactors). Solitary projects with direct instructions, either in or outside of the classroom setting, will work well for those who are more reflective (Dreamers). Activities that allow students to tap into their creative side, to receive quick payoffs, and to interact with each other and the instructor with high energy (such as role plays) will appeal to the more extrinsically motivated students, who prefer to be involved in fun and exciting projects (Rebels and Promoters).

If the students in educational leadership preparation programs resemble the educator sample (found by Gilbert, 2005), lecture, discussion, and group activities will provide ample ways to deliver concepts and skills. In fact, high-energy activities may enervate most students, and they will be reluctant to participate. It is unlikely that many administrative aspirants will prefer highly extrinsic activities; however, instructors should not ignore the possibility. While this article has focused on instructional effectiveness, one might note that getting needs met positively is a productive life pattern, within an instructional setting and beyond. Also, the pattern works for everyone—instructors and students alike.

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Text Coding: A Reading Strategy “Best Practice”

Linda J. Searby

How do you get educational leadership students to read an assigned textbook chapter and think about it critically? How do you insure that students are ready for a class discussion on the chosen topic for the week? How do you avoid the phenomenon of “I can hide myself in a class discussion if I haven’t read the material?” Those were questions I struggled with as a new college professor of Educational Administration until the day I was talking with an elementary reading teacher who told me about text coding. It is a simple strategy designed to get beginning readers to interact meaningfully with printed text. The teacher instructs the children to use letters and symbols jotted in the margins or put on post-it notes to code what they are thinking about as they read. Then the teacher brings children together in small groups to talk about what they have been thinking. The original version of text coding was called INSERT (Interactive Notation System for Effective Reading and Thinking) and was developed by Vaughn and Estes (1986). It has been used as a comprehension strategy in various forms by reading teachers for 20 years. It seemed like an idea that could easily be transported to a college or graduate school setting, so I decided to give it a try.

I assigned my graduate class in Leadership and Administration a chapter to read in our text. Students were to read and think critically about the material and jot notes to themselves as they read, using the following codes:

I = Interesting

? = I have a question about this

* = Important

A = Agree

D = Disagree

C = Connects to something else I know about

Most students did not mind writing in the margins of their textbooks, but the option of jotting their codes on small post-it[®] notes was also given. The goal of the text coding was to insure that students were ready to discuss the textbook material assigned to them. By using the codes to depict their reaction to the reading material, students interacted with the text in a meaningful way as they read it.

I had an unusually large class, so I anticipated that a whole group discussion on the text material would result in non-participation by many students. To insure that each student would get a chance to talk about what he/she had read that week, I had students organize themselves into discussion groups of five or six. As I planned to use this strategy throughout the semester, I asked them to choose a different discussion leader in their groups for each week of the class. The discussion leader was responsible for composing five to ten questions for the group for class time. When the groups came together, each student was prepared with his/her individual text coding as a basis for making a contribution to the discussion. The assigned leader was armed with questions to facilitate the discussion. As the instructor, I worked from group to group, listening in on discussions, observing the quality of the questions being asked and the responses being made. I could easily see at a glance which students had

read the text and interacted meaningfully with the material by coding it. Students earned weekly participation points for the text coding and for being actively involved in their small group discussions.

Since learning about text coding, I have used it in several graduate courses. I have been amazed at the results. Students come prepared for class, having read their assigned material. They have thought critically about what they have read. They are ready to discuss, question, debate, and share with classmates. No student can fade into the shadows of non-participation. Those who are more reticent about contributing in a large group discussion have a safe forum for sharing in the small group. Equity and balance are observed in the give-and-take small group interactions. And most importantly, there is 100% engagement in the learning activity.

The reaction of my students has been overwhelmingly positive. I have had comments such as “I really like this approach!” and “This really gives me motivation to read my assignment, which I need.” I had a graduate student come up to me after small group discussion time and say “This is my favorite part of our class each week!” I have seen students take the initiative to type out their discussion questions ahead of time and bring copies for everyone without any prompting to do so. I have witnessed students who never speak up in class sharing quality thoughts in the small group.

There is a saying that “everything old is new again.” Text coding, which has been around as an effective teaching strategy for young readers for a long time, has grown up and graduated. Thanks, primary teachers, for giving me a way to engage my college students in their text reading!

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Education Administration Professor's Role to Assure that Preparation Programs Address Validity and Critique Skills

Charles M. Achilles and Jeremy D. Finn

INTRODUCTION

Charged with guiding the learning and behavior of young students, educators must assure that education practice is based upon solid, replicable, and appropriate evidence. Recent (e.g. 2005-2006) disinformation and questionable practice in society can serve as a warning about the need for critique and attention to validity within education administration (Ed. Admin.) preparation programs. Consider the stem cell scandal that permeated prestigious medical journals and the journal *Science* or the embellishment of a best selling memoir whose fictions escaped crucial review. A *Wall Street Journal* (2006) editorial argued that “the New England Journal is joining the ranks of academic publications risking their reputations as non-partisan arbiters of good science in order to rumble in the political tarpits” (p. A-14).

Medical research reported in major journals is the “gold standard”—or is it? *The Week* (2005) noted “The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that up to 32 percent of scientific studies may be inaccurate and misleading” (p. 6). High visibility drug trials in 2005 raised questions about medicines (e.g., Vioxx). An medical doctor wrote about a first-day talk by the dean of a prestigious medical school: “Half of what we teach you here is wrong—unfortunately, we don’t know which half” (Saunders, 2002, p. 29). If “gold standard” work (e.g., medicine) is equivocal, what about education, whose research often is suspect?

Education’s research and preparation-program knowledge base (KB) is not exempt. Editors of a major education research journal found that: “35 of the most common errors made by authors . . . were presented . . . Nineteen . . . were committed by one-third or more authors, with seven of these errors made by 64% or more authors” (Onwuegbuzie & Daniels, 2005, p. 7). Article titles acknowledge the issue: “The development and publication of elementary mathematics textbooks: Let the Buyer Beware!” (Reys & Reys, 2006) and “Types of errors in synthesizing research in education” (Dunkin, 1996).

Perspective

Practitioners, who run schools often rely on *reports of research*—preliminary or secondary sources. Because they lack the time, resources, and training to analyze the primary research, they need skills to evaluate research interpretations and secondary sources upon which they base policies and programs. The sources must be valid. Consider one example of questionable validity. Many leadership programs included “In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America’s Best Run Companies” (Peters & Waterman, 1968). A *USA Today* (Leiberman, 2001) headline, reported one author’s confession. “Author: Data on successful firms ‘faked’ but still valid.” (Faked data are valid?) The book sounded like research, and seemed theory-based; professors professed it. It had it all—all that is, except validity. What steps might professors and practitioners consider to counter errors and assure that material is valid?

Purposes

This chapter has four purposes: (1) to provide examples of invalid interpretations of primary research and/or invalid critiques of valid research that influence debates and policy decisions, (2) to offer ways to screen education-improvement claims and strategies, (3) to help professors in selecting material and designing preparation programs. A fourth strand, textbook accuracy runs throughout the chapter.

The Problem: Concept Clarity and Validity

Examples here are from the long-standing debate about class size (CS) in elementary grades; its confusion with pupil teacher ratio, or PTR; and deleterious results of this confusion. When researchers summarize research and leaders use research summaries, precision and clear definitions are required. A class-size reduction (CSR) article should describe the class size that was reduced; the pre and post-conditions. In discussing class size, Picus (2001) stated: “There is little difference in the performance of students in regular-size classrooms compared to the performance of students in regular-sized classrooms with teacher aides” (p. 70). Reduced classroom size would be a facilities issue, not class size. The concepts here are often used interchangeably, but incorrectly!

Iannaccone (1975) emphasized the heart of the PTR and CS issue: “Descriptive reference is the first and most essential sense in which a concept has meaning” (p. 13). He explained that: “The clarity of the meaning of a concept turns on the precision of the relationship between the concept and its referent. . . . Lack of precision leads to lack of reliability in the concepts” (pp. 13–14). For this chapter, we define CS and PTR:

Class Size (CS)—“The number of students for whom a teacher is primarily responsible during a school year (Lewit & Baker, 1997, p. 113).” CS, an organization for instruction, is calculated by addition.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)—“The number of students in a school or district compared to the number of teaching professionals” (McRobbie et al., 1998, p. 4). PTR guides funding and staffing.

The PTR computations reflect local and state rules, and public relations (i.e., a favorable PTR sounds “good”). All educators may be part of PTR computations, including counselors, administrators, etc. In this division problem, the divisor is very important. Large databases provide PTR data, and not class-size data. Surveys provide PTR data, or at best aggregated data (especially in secondary schools) resulting in an estimated or average class size. Valid ways to get class-size data are a) to count students in a class and b) to establish class sizes and monitor them as in the Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) experiment. Despite the importance of the class unit in schooling, class-size research is rare because class-size data are not regularly collected or reported.

Hanushek (1998), an economist who often discusses class size, made the same point as did Iannaccone, “the conceptual ideal behind any measurement” is important: (1) “PTR reflects the total number of teachers and the total number of students at any time,” (2) “pupil-teacher ratios are not the same as class sizes,” and (3) “The only data that are available over time reflect the pupil-teacher ratios” (p. 12). The author then discusses CS by using PTR data. Consider the validity of conclusions caught in this paradox: Correct definition and incorrect usage. Validity, as used here is primarily from Babbie (1999). See Table 1.

Methods, Mode of Inquiry/Data Sources

Using CS examples, the authors discuss why education professors and leaders must understand and apply validity criteria to education research. Data sources include selected published primary and secondary research about class size (pro/con) as examples. The chapter concludes with ideas to improve Ed. Admin. preparation and guidelines to help practitioners judge research validity, program evaluation claims, and policy based on “research.”

A. Reviews, “Think Tank” Summaries and Non-Research Sources

An economist explained CS and PTR problems in conducting studies on CS and schooling outcomes. This

Table 1. Perspectives on Validity (Cited work is from Babbie, (1999).

<i>Validity</i>	“[T]he extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration.” (p. 113). . . . [A]ll of social life, including social research, operates on agreements about the terms we use and the concepts they represent.” (p. 113). Some criteria guide these agreements.
<i>Face Validity</i>	How an empirical measure may “jibe with common agreements and our individual mental images concerning a particular concept”) (p. 113). Does it look and “feel” right. [If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck . . .].
<i>Criterion-Related Validity (Predictive)</i>	“[B]ased on some external criterion. . . . [T]he validity of the College Boards is shown in its ability to predict the college success of students” (p. 113).
<i>Construct Validity</i>	“[B]ased on the logical relationships among variables” (p. 113). Here it would be related to “theoretical expectations” about the ways that the variable under consideration (e.g., class size) relates to other variables.
<i>Content Validity</i>	“[H]ow much a measure covers the range of meanings included within the concept.” So, a discussion of mathematical ability cannot cover just one part, such as addition; it must also consider things like subtraction, division, etc. (p. 114).
<i>“Ecological” Validity</i>	The representation of the concepts or variables in their usual or natural setting or context. This is not just the “real meaning” in general, but the meaning in actual usage in the context under study.

discussion illuminates the potential misdirection that can occur in CS studies without careful specifications of actual class sizes. (Akerhielm, 1995)

To the extent that an aggregate ratio differs from the class size that a student was actually exposed to, measurement error exists, biasing the coefficient of the class size variable toward zero.

In addition, pupil-teacher ratios are defined as the number of students in the school divided by the number of full-time teachers for an entire school and may have nothing to do with actual class size. This ratio often includes guidance counselors, principals, and special education teachers in the count of teachers, and thus the lower the ratio . . . regardless of actual class size.

If a school has a deliberate policy to assign difficult or less able students to smaller classes, then any positive effect of small class size on student performance may be disguised because such students may tend to score lower on tests. (p. 230)

Payne and Biddle (1999) summarized school effects research and included critiques of uncritical applications of research and results from one discipline to another. The quotes here demonstrate the need for precision as the definitions and methods or criteria for quality may be different for research conducted in different disciplines (e.g., economics and education). Results from non-education research, though informative, may be incorrectly applied to education.

Secondly, norms for publication in the field of economics stress the need for careful specification and derivation of structural models but give short shrift to the operational details of empirical studies. Thus, many studies in this literature provide few-to-no details about the sample used, the ways in which data were collected, the ways in which measuring scales were constructed, the reliability or validity of those scales . . .

. . . because of the widespread prevalence of design flaws in this literature one cannot use the bulk of its studies to reach valid conclusions about the net effects of school funding in America. Previous reviewers have tried to

reach such conclusions by aggregating results from the effort as a whole, but one cannot make a silk purse even out of many sows' ears, and unfortunately their efforts have implied, to the unwary, that one should take the corpus of this largely-flawed literature seriously. (p. 6)

Boozer and Rouse (1995) found that typically the larger the school, the more variance and thus, the larger are differences between PTR and class size. "The correlation between the pupil teacher ratio and the average class size is relatively low at 0.13 in the New Jersey Survey and 0.26 in the NELS" (p. 5, Note 8).

The Digest of Education Statistics (1999) defined class size (Table 69) as "The membership of a class at a given date" and PTR (Table 65) as "The enrollment of pupils at a given period of time, divided by the full-time equivalent number of classroom teachers serving these pupils during the same periods." Table 2 shows PTR masquerading as class size. Note (1) on Table 2 (see NB) describes the data source as *The Digest* (1999). Table 2 here is Harris & Plank's Table 1 (2000, p. 22) with NB added. *The Digest*, (1999) shows that the data labeled "class size" in the Harris and Plank table are PTR numbers from Table 65 (i.e., 25.8, 22.3, 18.7, and 17.2 for 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990 respectively).

After citing *The Digest* (a presumably reliable source), Harris and Plank (2000) questioned the efficacy of small classes and claimed that U. S. class sizes had shrunk from 25.8 in 1960 to 17.2 in 1990 with little evidence of equivalent student gains. These authors used the WRONG TABLE and data to support their "conclusions." Valid? No.

A widely-read professional journal featured class-size and school-size articles. Johnson's (2002) negative claims about class size were "adapted" from "Do Small Classes Influence Academic Achievement?" (Heritage Foundation, 2000), as explained by Johnson (p. 29).² Unfortunately, the "class size" data presented as evidence are the same PTR data that appear in Harris and Plank (2000) from a Federal Education laboratory's policy paper for legislators (see Table 2) and in Hanushek's (1998, 1999) discussions.

Confusion occurs when authors of secondary sources mindlessly "parrot" another secondary source without checking primary data. For example, Hanushek drew "conclusions" about class size but analyzed PTR data ("The only data available over time").³

The findings of the general ineffectiveness of reducing class sizes tend to be controversial if for no other reason than they tend to defy common sense, conventional wisdom, and highly publicized accounts of the available scientific evidence. (Hanushek, 1998, p. 1).

If findings defy "common sense, conventional wisdom and . . . available scientific evidence," what else is left to defy? Validity, perhaps, or logic? The issue may not be simple "validity,," but ideological views with policy implications. For example, Hanushek (1998) and Harris and Plank (2000), and Johnson (2002) all used the same data source. The authors were discussing class size for school administrators and policy persons but their data were clearly labeled PTR. Should a reader presume that the researchers can't read tables?

After a warning that PTR and class size were not the same, an author of an ERIC document used PTR data to

Table 2. National Trends Policies affecting class size and teacher quality have changed dramatically in recent years. Table I below summarizes these changes from 1960 to 1990.*

Table I—Changes in School Resources (1960–1990) ^{1 NB}					
Year	Class Size	Teacher Daily Wage (1990 dollars)	Proportion of Total Spending		
			Teacher Salaries and Benefits	Other Instructional	Administration Other Costs
1960	25.8	\$124	0.68	0.07	0.25
1970	22.3	\$155	0.67	0.11	0.22
1980	18.7	\$143	0.60	0.15	0.25
1990	17.2	\$183	0.612	0.12	0.27

*This is Table 1 from Harris and Plank (2000, p. 22), with notations added.

estimate costs for small classes. Not surprisingly, based on the wrong data, the costs were extraordinarily high (Picus, 2001, Chapter 4). Should such material be part of Ed. Admin. preparation, except as a bad example or exercise in critique?

This single web of interlocking misinformation includes professional media, a Federal Lab, an economist's opinion, an ERIC summary, a tax-exempt public policy research institute. Each source advanced "results" about CS that are, in fact, not CS, but PTR results. Because the negative conclusions apply correctly to PTR and not to CS outcomes, should educators make a systemic change from a PTR base to a class-size base? (Achilles & Finn, 2000).

B. Professional Pronouncements (Ex Cathedra) and Research Journals

Professional pronouncements (ex cathedra) and top-tier research journals may err. In an e-mail dated March 15, 2005, a concerned (and apparently well-informed) educator explained a meeting that included a discussion of STAR. A State Title I Director said: "There could be no possible way that having a small class size would help students' performance years later." "I spoke up and reported what I remembered . . . Could you confirm for me that I am remembering correctly?" Note that the supporting research for long-term CS effects is extensive: (e.g., Finn & Achilles, 1999; Finn, et al., 2001, 2005; Finn, et al., 2005; Krueger & Whitmore, 2001; Nye, et al, 1999).

A graduate student reported in 2004 that a full professor of teacher education told a class "There is not one scintilla of evidence that small classes make any difference in teaching or in student outcomes." Does opinion trump research?

The following includes errors in text that will, of course, get cited elsewhere, especially as the article includes sound advice about "mixed methods" in research. The excerpt (Chatterji, 2004, p. 5) demonstrates errors in material in top-tier education "scientific" journals. Brief comments [in brackets] explain four errors *italicized* here, *but the single paragraph included at least seven more serious errors of fact*. (Note that IV is independent variable).

"Consider the example of class-size studies. The 1980's Tennessee STAR (*Student Achievement Ratio*) experiment . . ." [The study name was incorrect. (STAR) is Student Teacher Achievement Ratio] . . . "However, here too, it was state sponsors/stakeholders, rather than researchers who manipulated the IV" [Professors with extensive research backgrounds headed teams from four universities to conduct STAR and were supported by panels of experts. The researchers manipulated the IV's (plural): CS and PTR.] . . . as well as "funded and authorized the study" . . . [The study was authorized and funded by the Tennessee Legislature] . . . The definition of the IV becomes complicated . . . [Not complicated at all! The legislation specified (defined) the IV(s): The research team operationalized them].

Tainted Texts

After many years as Executive Director of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Culbertson (1990) addressed invalid texts:

First, borrowed concepts tend to enter textbooks before they are adequately tested in school systems. . . . such concepts may be used . . . in training programs even though their actual relations to school . . . leadership practices remain unknown. (pp. 102–103).

English (2002) reviewed a popular Covey work and echoed Culbertson's concerns: [Covey's ideas] "are beginning to be included in a broad range of texts marketed to educational leaders, including textbooks for the formal preparation of school administrators" (p. 4). When not incorporated into texts, Covey's (1970) work is often supplemental reading in Ed. Admin.—as is Peters' and Waterman's (1982) book cited earlier.

Establish Criteria as a Basis for Judging Claims

Ed. Admin. persons must be skilled in critique (analyses followed by decisions to act). A first step is clarity and precision of definition as demonstrated by the PTR and CS confusion. A second step is to make clear a) the

goal(s) to be attained and b) the basis for judging the research upon which a decision is to be made (e.g., evidence, objectivity, comparisons, equivalence, persistence, realism, applicability, reliability) followed by minimum criteria for taking action. One criterion might be two or more independent, rigorous, replicable studies with robust findings before considering the “research” as a school-improvement initiative.

Because of the press of time, administrators, legislators and policy persons rely on secondary sources rather than reviewing primary research or convoluted academic papers. The requirement for accuracy (valid interpretation) is heightened because pupils are mandated to attend school. Disingenuously, policy pieces that use *PTR* data to argue against *CS* generally claim that (a) small classes are expensive (e.g., Johnson, 2002) and (b) because small classes don’t “work” then “money doesn’t matter” much (Hanushek, 1998). Both assertions are popular with politicians who claim to be conservators of the public’s funds—at least in education funding. Both are wrong. Unfortunately, pupils do not present compelling anecdotes of small class successes and they don’t vote.

Suggested Remedies

Rather than presenting added examples of research and validity errors, let’s consider some potential solutions. Most obvious are that researchers should have clear definitions, and writers and editors should check carefully that facts, definitions and presentations are clear and correct *at the time of the writing*. (New data may change “truth.”)

Preparation programs need to emphasize critical thinking and the “necessity of critique” in reading research. When research-based material becomes a policy option, consult the primary research. When two or more terms are used interchangeably, do the terms represent the “real meaning of the concept under consideration” and the “common agreements . . . concerning a particular concept” (Babbie, 1999, p. 113). When considering new programs, establish criteria for judging the quality of the underlying research and theory. If there are several databases, compare each data set to the criteria and rank the results of each comparison. Table 3 shows class-size findings compared to criteria for determining the value and utility of social programs (Crane, 1998).

A Seven-Level Phase Model to Guide Practitioners

Points made throughout the chapter are combined into a seven-level model to help practitioners sort the issues into valid and invalid claims based upon reasonable criteria. The serious task of educating America’s youth requires more than faked data being called “valid” by the sound-byte media, or policy built on ideology.

Level I. Research requires clear definition. Evaluate definitions of terms to see if the “research” base is accurately defined. The data should relate explicitly to the defined terms. Evaluations should report implementation fidelity to the original program design.

Level II. Assess research and evaluation results against established criteria, such as proposed in Crane (1998). See Table 3 for an example.

Level III. Assure that the author(s) of secondary sources avoided errors that bias research reviews. Dunkin’s (1996) nine types of errors can be guidelines: (a) Unexplained selectivity, (b) Lack of discrimination, (c) Erroneous detailing, (d) Double counting, (e) Non-recognition of faulty author conclusions (f) Unwarranted attributions, (g) Suppression of contrary findings, (h) Consequential errors, and (i) Failure to provide generalization evidence.

Level IV. Consider conflict of interests. Does an author or evaluator have significant monetary or reputational stake in a specific point of view? Does the research rest, at least partially, on independent, unbiased work of reasonably disinterested persons?

Level V. Peer review and ideology. Are publications refereed? Are publications from a generally non-biased outlet, as distinct from ideologically driven sources such as “think tanks” or organizations with financial stakes, or that produces their own “refereed” outlets?

Level VI. Synthesize and evaluate the results of Levels I-V within the local context where the policy or program is proposed. Does this make sense for you?

Level VII. If prior indicators are “go” at this point, read and critique the original (primary) research. You

Table 3. Critique of STAR Results Using Crane's (1998) Criteria. STAR is a Class-size Reduction (CSR) Experiment, Not a Pupil-teacher Ratio (PTR) Effort.*

Crane Criteria and Questions (Ans.)**	STAR'S FACTS
1. Do the benefits outweigh the costs? (<i>YES.</i>)	1. No definitive data in the short term (K-3). Responses in data. In "follow-up studies;" yes. In STAR reanalysis, yes. In alternative implementations, yes. See Krueger (1999; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Finn et al., 2001).
2. Does the program have a statistically significant effect on the treatment group? (<i>YES.</i>) p .01	2. Statistically significant differences were found each year, all years, and in all analyses done by STAR persons and by independent others (as far away as London); even by its critics. The significant results continued each year.
3. What is the magnitude of the program's effect? (<i>Effect Sizes, or ES, were large and consistent.</i>)	3. Effect-sizes (ES) were .17-.40 in early analyses. Effects were about twice as high for minority as for Anglo children, grades K-3 (each year, all years) including growth after students leave small classes (see #4). (Finn & Achilles, 1999; Finn et al., 2001; 2005).
4. How long do the effects of the program last? (<i>Effects last into high school and beyond.</i>)	4. Positive academic and social effects of K-3 small classes are highly visible in H.S. and beyond including in college-entrance tests. (Boyd-Zaharias & Pate-Bain, 2000; Krueger, 1999; Krueger & Whitmore, 2001; Finn et al., 2001, 2005, accepted).
5. What is the relationship of the evaluator to the program? (<i>Independent</i>)	5. STAR used an independent analyst. STAR staff did secondary analyses. The external expert's work was the published report. Others re-analyzed STAR data with similar results.
6. Can the program and its results be replicated? (<i>Yes, easily.</i>)	6. & 7. Consistently replicated in well designed class-size analyses. Replications of STAR have been achieved in single districts, and in general policy implementations. Reported gains and ES for well conducted studies are similar. Evaluations of state-wide small-class efforts in CA, in Texas (HB 72, 1984) and North Carolina suggest large-scale benefits, but some results are less definitive than STAR or SAGE in Wisconsin, probably because of less controlled implementations.
7. Can the program maintain effectiveness on a larger scale? (<i>Yes if CS is done correctly.</i>)	

* Social Programs That Work edited by Crane (1998). Russell Sage Foundation. 324 pages.

** Ans = Response for STAR class size work in italics.

might even contact the primary researchers and get their points of view. The decision to use or not to use a particular line of research or improvement process can have a significant impact on finances and on the future of students. The finite funds and the children belong to the clients, so the decision needs to be good!

CONCLUSION

Errors will creep into texts and journals, research designs are evolving, and ideologies will compete for acceptance. Thus, those who prepare education administrators need to serve a "gate keeper" role by selecting preparation materials carefully and in designing preparation programs to contain opportunities for students to review and discuss issues presented here. Based on copious evidence, we propose that Ed. Admin. preparation must include intense training in critical thinking with opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate critical analysis skills. Materials used in Ed. Admin. preparation must include valid information.

AUTHORS' NOTES

1. Material here is adapted from three sources: a) two papers presented at the American Educational Research

- Association (AERA) Annual Conference: New Orleans, LA, 4/2/02 and Montreal, 4/2/05, b) a paper prepared for the Mid-South Educational Research Association (MSERA) (2005, November) that was judged MSERA's James E. McLean Outstanding Paper and also presented at AERA, San Francisco, 4/06.
2. The Heritage Foundation paper (Johnson, 2000, June 9) was distilled into an Op-Ed titled "A Lesson in Smaller Class Sizes" and "distributed to newspapers by the Knight-Ridder Tribune Wire" [Rees, N. S. & Johnson, K. A. (2000, May 31). Op-Ed. Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation] (p. 1).
 3. Researchers have critiqued Hanushek's work, demonstrating his erroneous use of PTR for class size, questioning his "vote counting" methods and reluctance to use newer meta-analyses or to include available class size studies (e.g., STAR). See Krueger (2000). Sources shown here mis-use data clearly labeled as PTR data in a statistical compilation [Digest of Education Statistics (1999) U.S. Department of Education] that a) differentiates PTR and CS and b) provides separate tables for each.

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Using Student Feedback to Improve Faculty Effectiveness in the Classroom

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When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative evaluation; when the guest tastes it, that's summative evaluation" (Scriven, 1991, p. 19).

Translating Scriven's metaphor of the cook, the soup, and the guests into the setting of higher education provides a framework for the analysis of the use and effectiveness of student evaluations in university classrooms. The instructor, or the cook, offers soup (instruction) to the guests (students), and the guests partake of the soup—judging the quality of the soup through their personal experiences. Toward the end of the course, the students rate their satisfaction of the knowledge offering, judging the quality of teaching through their personal experiences. This evaluative information, in turn, is used by university administrators and tenure committees to make decisions about the merit and worth of the instructor. Although this metaphor may seem unrelated, instructors and faculty in many universities frequently experience such a process of evaluation.

The process and outcome of evaluations serve many purposes in a variety of applications and activities across a myriad of disciplines and industries. In general, evaluations are formed through a process of inquiry and judgment. Specifically, for this analysis, evaluation will be defined as a process that includes (a) a set of standards used to judge quality, (b) the collection of information, and (c) the application of the standards to determine value (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). Such a process, applied to faculty in higher education, has many labels, including student evaluation of teaching effectiveness (SETEs), students' evaluation of teaching effectiveness rating scale (SETERS), student evaluations (SEs), student ratings of teachers (SRTs), and student evaluations of teaching (SETs). Students complete SETs to rate courses and instructors on a variety of items utilizing instruments that vary widely across universities and even colleges and departments within a university.

Current research addressing the evaluation of teaching is filled with contradictions. The literature expounds that faculty evaluations may be influenced, among other things, by personality, course type, gender, and the student's anticipated grade (Delucchi, 2000; Greenwald, 2001; Worthington, 2002). The purpose of this chapter is to identify the factors that influence student evaluations of instructors. By understanding the limitations and effective uses of student evaluations, instructors, university administrators, and tenure committees can use student feedback in the most effective and appropriate manner.

HISTORY OF SETS

Sometimes an uneasy topic for faculty members, SETs have had a varied history of use in collegiate settings. In the past, teaching within the university level has had little supervision, possibly because teaching is performed in isolation, "or, at least, out of the sight of colleagues and administrators" (Knapper, 2001, p. 6). During medieval times, students acknowledged their approval or disapproval of an instructor by stamping their feet or walking out of a lecture (Knapper). SETs were first utilized in the United States in 1924 at Harvard as reflected

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in the student periodical entitled *Confidential Guide to Courses* (Seldin, 1980). Later in the 1960s, SETs were employed because they were thought “to be able to offer a ready vehicle for assessing faculty hired to teach the droves of students entering post-secondary institutes” (Emery, Kramer, & Tian, 2003, p. 38). In 1973, students were involved in the evaluation of teaching at 30% of the higher educational institutions (Wilson as cited in Stack, 2003). By the 1990s, 98% of four-year institutions were requiring their students to participate in the process and the remaining 2% of colleges were contemplating student involvement in SETs (Magner as cited in Stack, 2003). For over 20 years, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has required the use of regular evaluations of individual faculty members as criteria for accreditation (SACS, 1998). Currently, ideologies such as Total Quality Management (TQM) have led to the use of evaluation data as indicators of institutional effectiveness (Theall & Franklin, 2000). The use of SETs is a common practice and one that is likely to remain.

FACTORS INFLUENCING SETS

It has been debated whether or not grade inflation, personality, and gender, among other factors, influence the accuracy of student evaluations. Regardless of the controversy surrounding the utilization of SETs, they are a fact of life for most university faculty members and have become the most relied upon element in assessing the quality of instructors (Arreola, 2000). If colleges and universities are to continue to place heavy emphasis on SETs, it is imperative that faculty members understand factors that may influence the evaluations and recognize the controversy of these powerful assessment tools. Numerous factors have been identified and examined in research studies spanning the past 30 years. Those factors occurring with the highest frequency were selected for this review and included (a) student grades, (b) instructor personality, (c) instructor gender, (d) instrument validity and reliability, and (e) limitations of student perceptions.

Student Grades

Grade inflation is an often-discussed topic in the SET literature. According to Sojka, Gupta, and Deeter-Schmelz (2002), some instructors believed that lowering expectations and being a more captivating presenter resulted in higher SET scores. Conversely, students were “less likely to agree that student evaluations encourage faculty to grade more leniently, have an influence on faculty members’ careers, or lead to changes in courses and/or teaching styles” (p. 47). Moreover, Marsh and Roche (2000) found that simply making a class easier or inflating grades did not lead to higher SETs. In some instances, instructors who required less student effort were subjected to lower SET scores. Regardless of the impact of grade inflation on final SET scores, Martinson (2004) recommended that college administrators, instructors, and students openly address factors related to this inflation.

Related to elevated grades, SETs can be influenced by a student’s expected grade for the course. At many institutions, student evaluations are administered before final grades have been assigned; hence, when evaluating a course, students consider both the grades they have received and those they anticipate they will earn. Students who expect higher grades may provide instructors with higher scores as compared to those expecting lower grades (Millea & Grimes, 2002). Greenwald (2001) and Greenwald and Gillmore (1997) found a relationship between the expected grade and SET responses. Arreola (2000) concurred that students give higher scores to instructors when they received (or thought they would receive) higher grades. Radmacher and Martin (2001) explained this finding by correlating grades and SETs, noting that it could be attributed to better teaching which resulted in better grades. Isely and Singh (2005) found that the more closely the student’s expected grade corresponded with the student’s GPA, the less the SET was affected. In conclusion, great variability exists among instructors related to the alignment of instructional objectives with valid assessments and resulting scores. Because this factor is seldom controlled for in the studies reviewed, conclusions that grade inflation and higher anticipated grades by students resulted in higher SETs cannot be supported.

Instructor Personality

Personality of the instructor is another much debated area in terms of possible effects upon SETs. Often

thought of as “popularity contests,” SETs were first designed to be a student-directed technique for selecting courses and instructors (Knapper, 2001, p. 7). Delucchi (2000) drew attention to the notion that the likeability of a faculty member had a positive effect on the overall SET and that personality had a greater impact on the instructor’s ratings than outcomes such as learning. Moreover, Radmacher and Martin (2001) found that being an extravert was “the most significant predictor of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness, even after controlling for grades, enrollment status, and student age” (p. 265). These researchers concluded that instructors “who are approachable, enthusiastic, and outgoing with a sense of humor” may be more effective teachers (p. 265).

Shevlin, Banyard, Davies, and Griffiths (2000) observed a “halo effect” in the use of SETs in that the likeability of the instructor explained “a significant proportion of the scale’s variation” as compared to the rated ability of the lecturer or the instructional components of the course (p. 402). The researchers provided an alternative explanation of the relationship by proposing that the perceived charisma of an instructor may be highly influenced by his or her ability to lecture.

When students were asked to list characteristics of the instructors that they rated highest and lowest on SETs, students noted that the best instructors were enthusiastic, humorous, and appeared to be satisfied with their career choice of teaching (Waters, Kemp, & Pucci, 1988). Students tended to give higher ratings to instructors perceived as having charisma (Delucchi, 2000). At the same time, Arreola (2000) wrote that student ratings on SETs did not constitute popularity contests if the instrument was valid, reliable, and “constructed using professional psychometric procedures” (p. 80). Often, however, academic departments do not use instruments that have been created or designed in a valid and/or reliable manner, leaving these instruments wide-open for invalid and unreliable outcomes (Arreola).

Gender of the Instructor

The relationship of an instructor’s gender to his or her teaching effectiveness has been debated for many years. Several studies have resulted in common descriptors for females and males. Tieman and Ranin-Ullock (1985) studied expected gender traits and concluded that females were more likely to be “emotional, affectionate, and concerned with the well-being of others” and males were more likely to be “aggressive, rational, and self-sufficient” (p. 178). In the notable Dr. Fox study (Naftulin, Ware, & Donnelly, 1973; Ware & Williams, 1975) an experiment designed to test for the impact of gender, an instructor’s personal teaching style was found to be more influential. This experiment revolved around a professional actor, both handsome and entertaining, who portrayed a lecturer for a group of educational and medical students. In this study, the lecturer, Dr. Myron L. Fox, deliberately spoke gibberish and nonsense throughout the lecture but in an entertaining manner and received high SET scores from students. This study also indicated that the personality of female instructors was more related to student satisfaction than gender alone.

In a later study, Freeman (1994) asked students to select a preferred instructor among three choices sorted by feminine, masculine, and androgynous characteristics. Students selected both female and male instructors equally, though students most often preferred the androgynous instructor. Another study (Whitworth, Price, & Randall, 2002) indicated that students believed that female instructors were more effective than male instructors in the classroom in terms of promoting learning. In conclusion, although several studies have shown that students may prefer female instructors, the preference is more likely related to the teaching behaviors of the instructor (Centra & Gaubatz, 2000).

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Ratings provided by students have been in use for 30 or more years, though “it is a rare campus where they are accepted with equanimity” (Knapper, 2001, p. 3). What instructors and administrators believe is being measured by SETs may not even come close to what is actually being assessed. Because SETs are often created by committees or individuals who are not trained to design such instruments, the instruments are heavily laden with many forms of measurement error. SETs can be prejudiced by factors not directly related to instruction; therefore, reliability and validity of scores become frequently debated issues (Arreola, 2000).

Limitations of Student Perceptions

Faculty members frequently make the case that students are often unable to accurately evaluate instructional value (Feeley, 2002; Howell & Symbaluk, 2001). SETs require students to assess items pertaining to a particular course and instructor, something not all students are prepared to do. Instead, professors should evaluate many of the items students are asked to assess on SETs as students may lack knowledge of the “currency of course material, the professor’s mastery of the subject, the appropriateness of instructional objectives, reading lists, or textbooks” (p. 38). Moreover, Delucchi (2000) found that “students do not define overall teaching ability in terms of their own effort and perceptions of learning” (p. 220).

Knapper (2001) believes that administrators and faculty have imposed their own definitions of good teaching when including questions on the instrument about “organization, fair grading, quality of feedback, enthusiasm, and concern for students’ needs” (p. 4) and request that students use their own judgment and prior experiences to rate good teaching (Knapper, 2001). Furthermore, students rarely understand the many facets impacting the dynamics of a course, such as class size, faculty relationships, tenure, and levels of institutional support (Ballantyne, Borthwick, & Packer, 2000), limiting the students’ perceptions of good teaching and impacting SETs ratings.

Often, students’ own personalities and personal, outside needs are reflected during the SET completion process. Small, Hollenbeck, and Haley (1983) found that students who were in more negative moods at the end of a semester were more abrasive in their SET scoring, compared to students in more affable moods. In addition, students who assumed responsibility for their own performance tended to be better students who, in turn, tended to provide more valid instructor ratings as compared to those who are “externally oriented students” that “place responsibility or blame on their instructor for their grades and measured course performance” (Grimes, Millea, & Woodruff, 2004, p. 143). In conclusion, “students possess a moderate degree” of insight when evaluating faculty effectiveness (Harrison, Ryan, & Moore, 1996, p. 779).

There are several ways in which the SET process can miss the mark, and SETs can be influenced by items other than quality and delivery of instruction, such as student grades, instructor personality and gender, and limitations with the instrument (Worthington, 2002; Delucchi, 2000; Greenwald & Gillmore 1997). Overall, findings from Cohen’s (1981) meta-analysis indicated that “students do a pretty good job of distinguishing among teachers on the basis of how much they have learned” (p. 305).

Tenure, Promotion, and Merit and Uses of SETs

Instructors have questioned whether SETs are dependable for making personnel decisions (Emery, Kramer, & Tian, 2003). Although evaluations of teaching may include assessments from colleagues, alumni, and the instructor, universities are most influenced by SETs when grading instructor quality (Hobson & Talbot, 2001). Hobson and Talbot believe that well-developed student evaluations with adequate reliability and validity data may be some of the best measures of teaching effectiveness and can provide data for tenure and promotion decisions. In addition to instruction, other teacher behaviors should influence tenure and promotion including the selection of course materials, course design, assessment practices, and scholarship related to teaching (Hall & Fitzgerald, 1995).

The use of multiple measures is encouraged for summative evaluations. Emery, Kramer, and Tian (2003) proposed that administrators focus only on qualitative SET responses when providing instructors with formative evaluation information and “focus on objective measures of outcomes for the teaching portion of promotion and tenure decisions” (p. 43). In one study, researchers found that the university administrators who considered teaching as an important indicator of institutional effectiveness were also most likely to consider multiple data sources when judging teaching effectiveness and making promotion decisions (Read, Rama, & Raghunandan, 2001). Martinson (2004) summarized the use of SETs by stating that:

The current evaluation process is nearly universally utilized because it is viewed by many as a practical solution for evaluating professors. It certainly is useful as a public relations tool. In some ways, everyone benefits. Students, at least, are partially mollified because it gives them a feeling that they have some voice. Administra-

tors are able to point to hard numbers when evaluating faculty. Professors benefit because the ratings that students give typically are terribly inflated, probably more inflated than the grades that students receive. (p. 50)

Implications for Faculty

Although SETs “provide a modest index of instructional effectiveness” (Cohen, 1983, p. 456), faculty are well-advised to become informed about and involved in the SET process. Several suggestions, based on this exploration of the literature surrounding SETs, serve to facilitate faculty improvements in both their SET scores and their quality of instruction.

1. Students are concerned about the personal characteristics of instructors and tend to be more satisfied with those instructors who are personable, approachable, and concerned. Radmacher and Martin (2001) indicated that being extraverted was “the most significant predictor of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness, even after controlling for grades, enrollment status, and student age” (p. 265), and that teachers with these characteristics may in fact be more effective teachers, thus disputing that SETs are merely popularity contests. Moreover, students described their ideal teachers as being concerned, respectful, helpful, and open to differing opinions (Feldman, 1976). In addition to expecting professors to uphold high standards related to teaching, students wanted their instructors to be approachable and caring.
2. Instructors can help to improve validity concerns of the instrument by becoming informed and involved. Hobson and Talbot (2001) recommended that faculty review information about how their SET was formed and designed and remain updated on the trends of faculty evaluation. By understanding the basics of psychometrics and instrument design, faculty can work to educate other key decision makers on ways to improve the validity of ratings. Moreover, the summative evaluations of faculty should include a variety of methods to assess teaching effectiveness. Instructors are in the ideal position to suggest additional methods for evaluation teaching quality. Faculty members who are willing to serve on various committees to improve and revise existing instruments can greatly impact the evaluation process for themselves and their colleagues. Finally, the academic community must come to “some consensus on what we understand ‘good teaching’ to be. Yet it is surprising that either this is often not done or such criteria are implicit and never openly discussed” (Knapper, 2001, p. 4). If universities are not aware of what “good teaching” is, how can students be asked to assess “good teaching”?
3. SETs can provide instructors with valuable information that can facilitate positive classroom change. Because SETs are generally distributed at the end of a course, those students who provide information have completed the class and are, thus, unable to benefit from the changes, thus “reinforces[ing] the idea that faculty ignore student evaluations” (Sojka, Gupta, & Deeter-Schmelz, 2002, p. 47). To address this common concern, Hobson and Talbot (2001) recommended that faculty members examine students’ evaluations halfway through the course and begin working to improve teaching at that time. Finally, faculty who receive high SET ratings should become worthy models of excellent teaching by continually exploring ways to help students master learning objectives in the most efficient and effective manner possible (Marsh & Roche, 2000).

CONCLUSIONS

Student evaluations of teaching (SETs) are a common experience for most faculty members and represent an integral part of faculty assessment for tenure and promotion. Because SETs are being used in many colleges and universities to substantially impact such decisions, faculty members must understand what SETs are evaluating and, in turn, use them to draw value for improvement. Even though it is often assumed that higher ratings are given to those instructors who inflate grades or demonstrate charisma, many researchers dispute this conjecture. These same researchers identify trends that favor students who are being treated fairly within an environment that values content, student mastery, and quality.

In some instruments, measurement biases may prohibit any useful information from being gleaned from SETs. If the instrument is valid, reliable, and the process involves multiple data sources, then faculty should be able to utilize this feedback to improve effectiveness in the classroom, but often “Considerable information is

lost when the students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness are summarized with a single score or even a small number of scores" (Marsh, 1991, p. 294). Hence, faculty must understand and educate others about the empirical findings related to the use of SETs as indicators of instructor effectiveness. According to Theall and Franklin (2000), "We must continually re-validate and, if needed, revise our approach to be sure that ratings data are valid and reliable in changing contexts, but also to ensure that they are productive and effectively support the decision-making processes they were intended to inform" (p. 96).

In summary, faculty members continue to report discomfort with evaluation ratings based on SET instruments (Theall & Franklin, 2000). In fact, 30 years ago, an article appearing in the *Teaching of Psychology* stated that "until much more research is done, caution should be exercised in possible misuse of these [SET] ratings" (Chandler, 1978, p. 150). One hurdle concerning SETs that must be approached directly is the level at which faculty believe that SETs are valuable and provide pertinent, usable information. Although many studies have been conducted in the past three decades, faculty and SET committees strive to develop a SET tool that is valid, reliable, and promotes positive change in the classroom. Without this appropriate, valid, and reliable feedback on this assessment tool, instructors are destined to continue to be presented with the same roadblocks to improvement in classroom effectiveness as in the past. For—if you always do what you always did—you'll always get what you always got.

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Assessing Faculty Consensus on the Quality of Student Work

Connie Fulmer, Dorothy Garrison-Wade, Frank Bingham and Ken Reiter

The Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies (ALPS) faculty at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center developed twelve performance-based assessments and associated evaluation rubrics for the principal-administrator licensure program. These assessments—developed over a period of three years—were designed as learning experiences based on job-related activities and performances required of school principals. Subsequently, faculty constructed scoring rubrics by integrating state and national standards, relevant research-based literature, and other appropriate, project-specific assessment criteria. To these rubrics, faculty added Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) six facets of understanding as proficiency criteria: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. The bulk of this curriculum work was completed as part of ongoing program-improvement efforts. However, the process of constructing the program folio for the Educational Leadership Constituent Council as part of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation process added a sense of urgency to this work and resulted in fine-tuning both projects and rubrics.

The licensure program is delivered to cohort students in four learning domains of eight credits each, spread over four consecutive semesters. The first domain focuses student learning on four leadership projects: (a) core values, (b) school culture, (c) family-community engagement, and (d) mission-vision. Work in the second domain features four school-improvement projects: (a) school quality, (b) data analysis, (c) curriculum audit, and (d) writing and implementing the school improvement plan. The third learning domain features two projects—one related to evaluation and the other to professional growth and development of staff. These projects engage students in (a) evaluation cycles and (b) instructional leadership work samples. The final domain features two integrated projects drawn from content typically associated with traditional *law*, *finance*, and *policy* classes: (a) No Child Left Behind, and (b) legal audit. All twelve projects—combined with clinical-practice requirements—form the backbone of the licensure program.

To provide some degree of continuity for students, each project was constructed using a common format or structure (see Table 1). These components were constructed with attention to Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) concepts of *uncoverage* and *guiding questions*.

Next we set about the work of building performance rubrics and looked for guidance to the literature on performance assessment (Arter & McTighe, 2001; Marzano, Pickering, & McTighe, 1993; McBrien & Brandt, 1977; Lorin, 2000; Linn, & Miller, 2004; Marzano & Guskey, 2002; Popham, 2003; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This was our initial attempt at developing and using rubrics to grade student work. After many false starts, we settled on rubrics that include four common criteria elements (see Table 2) and additional criteria specific to each of the twelve projects (see Table 3). Common criteria elements form the reflective justification section of the rubric (RJ-C1 through RJ-C4) and require students to write about their learning so that the written product provides evidence of meeting performance standards for principals in Colorado. Student work—evi-

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Table 1. Performance-Assessment Format.

Rationale
Project description
Guiding questions
Literature
Learning activities
Work products
Suggested artifact structure (headings)
Grading rubric

dence of meeting standards—should address these four elements: (a) use and understanding of appropriate standards, (b) reference to key literature and content, (c) a description of related school contexts, and (d) an action plan, or response repertoire based on standards, literature, and school context for leadership. The remaining criteria elements (C-5 through C-18) are project specific and require additional types of performance evidence.

To this initial structure, we added three categories of proficiency for each criteria element: (a) emergent, (b) proficient, and (c) exemplary. Next, we layered Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) six facets of understanding across these categories. As a result, the emergent category requires students to provide evidence of understanding for at least the level of *explanation*. For the proficient category, students are expected to add evidence of *application* and *interpretation* to their *explanations*. The exemplary category requires that students include all six levels of understanding in written work. This means that students must provide evidence of understanding that integrates not only *explanation*, *interpretation*, and *application*, but also is communicated with *empathy*, *perspective*, and *self-knowledge* (see Table 4). For example, student work that cites key pieces of literature (RJ-C2) but includes only the first three levels of understanding (explanation, interpretation, application) would fall into the second proficiency category and be scored as proficient.

Initially, while we were pleased to have developed rubrics, we struggled as a faculty with what that actually meant for our program. Comments from students on teaching evaluations indicated that we were not all on the *same page*—or rubric. As a result, grading was perceived as uneven between professors. While the rubric process had informed us of the conceptual underpinnings of what we were attempting to do and why, the use of the rubrics as developmental tools for instruction had not yet permeated the teaching and learning culture of our program. In the beginning, rubrics were mere appendages resulting from an NCATE process. Student feedback prepared us to face the brutal fact (Collins, 2001) that we had more work to do.

The event that pushed our group to study faculty consensus was the request from the Associate Dean of Research of the School of Education and Human Development to have students post their work into an online eFolio environment for scoring purposes. This electronic environment would not only provide a common framework for faculty to score student work, but also make data collection for future NCATE reports much easier to accomplish. This request resulted in a decision by our faculty to take a closer look at our differential levels of use (Hall & Hord, 1987) of our projects, project rubrics, and the project model for leadership preparation. These were the very beginnings of the first ALPS inter-rater reliability (IRR) study.

The desired and expected outcomes of this effort were to (a) develop program norms and cross-faculty expectations for student work; (b) determine possible adjustments required of program projects, performance assess-

Table 2. Common Criteria Elements for Performance Assessments

Student work addressed the following criteria elements
RJ-C1 Appropriate standards
RJ-C2 Key content and literature
RJ-C3 Context of the school
RJ-C4 Response repertoire or action plan written in "I" statement format

Table 4. Proficiency Criteria for Reflective Justification Rubric Criteria Indicators.

Elements	Emergent	Proficient	Exemplary
RJ-C1 Appropriate Standards	Reflective justification references project standards and provides a basic awareness or level of understanding (explanation) of the knowledge, dispositions, and skills indicated by the standards for a school leader.	Reflective justification references project standards and provides evidence of conceptual understanding (explanation, interpretation, application) of knowledge, dispositions, and skills indicated by the standards for a school leader.	Reflective justification is devoid of errors, references project standards and provides evidence of conceptual and reflective understanding (explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge) of knowledge, dispositions, and skills indicated by the standards for a school leader.
RJ-C2 Key Citations and Content	Reflective justification references appropriate literature (authors) and provides a basic awareness or level of understanding (explanation) of the general topic, thesis, focus, or content of those works.	Reflective justification references appropriate literature (authors) and related content (frameworks, theories, models, or strategies) and provides a conceptual understanding (explanation, interpretation, and application) of the general topic, thesis, focus, or content of those works and related content (frameworks, theories, models, or strategies).	Reflective justification is devoid of errors and references appropriate literature (authors) and related content (frameworks, theories, models, or strategies) and provides a conceptual and reflective understanding (explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge) of the general topic, thesis, focus, or content of those works and related content (frameworks, theories, models, or strategies).
RJ-C3 Context	Reflective justification refers to a particular and contextualized school environment and provides a basic awareness or level of understanding (explanation) of how that context provides an action arena in which school leaders operate and how the integration of performance standards, literature, and school context influences a leader's choice of action.	Reflective justification refers to a particular and contextualized school environment and provides a conceptual understanding (explanation, interpretation, application) of how that context provides an action arena in which school leaders operate and how the integration of performance standards, literature, and school context influences a leader's choice of action.	Reflective justification is devoid of errors, references a particular and contextualized school environment and provides a conceptual and reflective understanding (explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, self-knowledge) of how that context provides an action arena in which school leaders operate and how the integration of performance standards, literature, and school context influences a leader's choice of action.
RJ-C4 Response Repertoire	Reflective justification includes a response repertoire that provides a basic awareness or level of understanding (explanation) of what you have learned, how you would apply it, and what you do in the future as the leader.	Reflective justification includes a response repertoire that provides a conceptual understanding (explanation, interpretation, application) of what you have learned, how you would apply it, and what you would do in the future as the leader.	Reflective justification is devoid of errors and includes a response repertoire that provides a conceptual and reflective understanding (explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, self-knowledge) of what you have learned, how you would apply it, and what you would do in the future as the leader.

ments, or grading expectations of faculty; (c) revise evaluation criteria or recalibrate scoring; and (d) enhance instructional strategies to support students as they work toward project completion.

METHODOLOGY

Statistical analyses for inter-rater reliability have a home in the larger methodology of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Weber 1990; Neuendorf, 2002.) The structure of rubrics, proficiency levels, and criteria elements define categories for classifying student work. The process of classification yields a judgment about the quality of that work. That judgment identifies student work as being emergent, proficient, or exemplary. The unit of analysis in this study was each performance assessment (twelve projects) with subunits of analysis being the specific criteria elements of each performance assessment. The formula used to compute the inter-rater reliability statistic follows.

$$(\# \text{ of Agreements} / \# \text{ of Agreement} + \# \text{ of Disagreements}) * 100$$

The interpretation of inter-rater reliability scores is a complex process that includes the assumption of the reliability and validity of the performance assessments and rubrics. Generally if both are well designed, inter-rater reliability scores are high with strong consensus that the rubric is both valid and reliable and measures the relative quality of student work. When inter-rater reliability scores are low, it signals problems with (a) the performance-assessment instrument itself, levels of proficiency, or the criteria elements selected; or (b) errors in judgment in the use of the instrument due to either misunderstanding of the evaluation categories or lack of experience in using the assessment instrument. For our faculty, this study was a first step to assess faculty consensus on the quality of student work.

Each faculty member was assigned as host to one or more of the twelve PBAs and asked to select an example of student work for each performance assessment. After a discussion about how this work should be selected, it was decided that selection should be random. The rationale for this decision was that, if faculty members selected only exceptional student work for the study, it would skew data and mask the degree of consensus in using rubrics to determine the quality of student work.

All student work collected was forwarded to the division coordinator, the equivalent of a department chair. All identifiers were removed from these products. To distribute the work load for scoring projects, the division coordinator assigned faculty to specific review teams for each performance assessment (see Table 5). Student work, project descriptions, and evaluation rubrics were provided to faculty reviewers in both hard copy and electronic form. A deadline was set for scoring student work. Faculty hosts collected scores from review teams

Table 5. Distribution of Faculty Work Load for IRR Study by Hosts and by Raters.

Faculty Host	PBA	Rater A	Rater B	Rater C	Rater D	Rater E
Host A	5751.1	X	X	X		
Host A	5751.2	X	X			X
Host A	5751.3	X	X			X
Host D	5751.4		X		X	X
Host C	5752.1			X	X	X
Host C	5752.2		X	X	X	
Host C	5752.3	X	X	X	X	
Host C	5752.4	X		X		X
Host D	5753.1	X			X	X
Host D	5753.2	X		X	X	X
Host B	5754.1		X	X	X	
Host E	5754.2	X	X	X	X	X

Table 6. Inter-Rater Reliability Scores by Performance Assessment and Faculty Pairs.

Program Performance Assessments	1st Pair	2nd Pair	3rd Pair	4th Pair	5th Pair	6th Pair
Core Values	29%					
School Culture		73%				
Mission-Vision		86%				
Family Community Engagement			64%			
School Improvement: Quality			38%	78%	63%	
School Improvement: Data Analysis			33%			
School Improvement: Curriculum Audit	50%			63%		50%
School Improvement: Writing the Plan	38%	50%			88%	
Evaluation Cycles		75%	75%			75%
Instructional Leadership Work Sample	25%	71%	43%	57%	57%	25%
Legal Audit				63%		
No Child Left Behind	6%	0%	39%	17%	67%	44%

and forwarded them to the division coordinator. When all scores were compiled, inter-rater reliability statistics were computed. Results from faculty-pair analyses are arrayed in Table 6 by performance-based assessment. Table 7 illustrates the variability in faculty consensus across faculty-pairs and criteria elements for one of the performance assessments.

FOCUS GROUP DATA FROM FIRST ROUND OF SCORING

Inter-rater reliability analyses were used to determine faculty consensus on the quality of student work and to provide the context for focus-group conversations that followed the first round of scoring. Faculty collected qualitative data on the process used in the project and changes in faculty perceptions of current performance assessments, rubrics, and the quality of student work. Initial questions (see Table 8) were used to guide faculty discussions. Summaries of those conversations are described below.

Scoring Student Work

Faculty agreed that while they were experienced at grading student work, this project raised the stakes for them. One faculty member created a specific scoring sheet to track standards cited and literature referenced by

Table 7. Faculty-Pair Consensus by Criteria Element for the Instructional Leadership Work Sample PBA.

					IRR 25%	IRR 25%	IRR 57%	IRR 57%	IRR 43%	IRR 71%
					Pair A – B	Pair B – C	Pair C – D	Pair A – C	Pair A – D	Pair B – D
5753.2 Element	A	B	C	D						
RJ-C1	2	1	2	1				X		X
RJ-C2	3	1	2	2			X			
RJ-C3	2	2	1	2	X				X	X
RJ-C4	2	1	1	1		X	X			X
C5	2	1	2	2			X	X	X	
C6	2	2	2	2	X	X	X	X	X	X
C7	2	1	2	1				X		X

Table 8. Questions Used to Guide Faculty Discussion.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has this study changed what you think about scoring student work in general? 2. Has this study changed what you think about your scoring of projects? 3. Has this study changed what you think about the project descriptions? 4. Has this study changed what you think about the rubric? 5. What ideas did you learn from others about these assessments, rubrics, or student work? 6. What would change about the assessment? 7. What would change about the rubric? 8. What would change in working with students to prepare them for this work?

students. Another realized how inconsistent writing requirements were between projects. Several spoke about how the holistic approach to assigning grades had to be abandoned once rubrics entered the picture. Yet another noted the need to more consistently apply the rubric to student work when grading. Another admitted that when choices between levels of proficiency had to be made, many times those decisions were subjective in the end. We agreed that we needed more practice in using rubrics and decided to use part of future meetings to continue to work toward building faculty consensus on the quality of student work.

Issues with Performance Assessments

Faculty members shared perceptions that emerged from our discussion: (a) more structure is needed to guide student work; (b) some project descriptions are confusing to students; (c) the projects need to be streamlined, simplified, and strengthened; and (d) as currently written, projects are not designed to hold students accountable for the literature.

Structure for student work. Several comments from faculty pointed to the need for more structure in written artifacts required by performance assessments. Additionally, it was noted that some rubrics did not align well with project descriptions. This could be accomplished by indicating specific headings to be used in student work that paralleled criteria indicators drawn from assessment rubrics. Initially, some faculty believed that the structure for student work was inherent in project descriptions, but evidence available in student work told a different story. Faculty decided that specifying headings for student work would support continuity among faculty members teaching the same PBAs. We agreed that more structure would be helpful to both students and instructors.

Project descriptions. Projects were developed in the field by instructional teams drawn from metro-area school districts. As projects were shared across districts, adjustments were made to suit local purposes. Over time, the project descriptions became confusing and at times contradictory, a result that closely resembles the parable of the blind men and the elephant. We were in agreement that our PBA descriptions were not as clearly written as they need to be—either for faculty or students. Plans were made to continue to score student work at upcoming faculty meetings with the goal not only to continue to build faculty consensus but also to find areas in project descriptions that need to be clarified.

Streamline, simplify, and strengthen the PBAs. The IRR study gave faculty the opportunity to share positive perceptions of the overall quality, depth, and complexity of the twelve PBAs. Even so, faculty were concerned that students were spending too much time trying to match performance standards with specific projects. Faculty also agreed strongly that standards should be assigned to specific projects. The matrix produced from this conversation included all standards arrayed by performance assessments and clinical-practice requirements. This tool—named the scurry matrix—would simplify the standard-placement issue and ensure that faculty and students could focus time and attention on standards in the context of the performance assessments.

Faculty further expressed concern that—with the exception of the design of the clinical-practice experience (Fulmer, Muth, & Reiter, 2004)—the twelve performance-based assessments are the total assessment strategy of the program. Each PBA requires a substantial amount of work from students, as they provide evidence of meeting related performance standards, and from faculty, as they score the quality of that work. Perhaps some of

these standards could be assessed using shorter, more easily administered and scored assessment tools. We wondered if our program was too PBA heavy and decided to explore this question with assessment experts at our university. Several instances occurred in which more than one project incorporated similar learning activities. We intend to eliminate the duplications.

Presently—at a minimum—it takes faculty members an hour to grade one student-submitted product. Most faculty members provide students with opportunities to make multiple submissions of work during the semester, adding to the total time spent on grading student work. While some leadership programs may struggle with the move from traditional white-paper assessments to those more performance-based, we are taking time to stop and reflect on how deeply we have moved into the world of performance-based assessments and what that might mean for continued program improvement. Finally, several faculty members were motivated by the discussion to modify and strengthen projects by changing or refocusing expected student outcomes. Others commented that specific projects needed some revision to ensure that students could reach the learning outcomes as required by project rubrics.

Accountability for literature. The discussion also uncovered a worry that performance assessments as currently written may not hold students accountable for thoroughly reading and digesting related leadership literature. Others felt that knowledge of the literature should be apparent in the appropriateness of students' use of reference citations in written work. Part of this concern is based on the fact that faculty have not actually mapped the required program literature to performance standards. Literature selected for the program is based on the perceived support each reference provides to students when completing projects. The faculty turned to a spreadsheet tool in an attempt to link specific texts and chapters in those texts, as well as journal articles, with specific program projects. This work is currently in progress.

Faculty members debated what type of evidence indicated proficient or exemplary levels of content mastery. For some, to be scored as proficient, student work had to include the appropriate use of a quote. For others, proficient meant that student work had to evidence conceptual models or frameworks presented by authors of that literature. For exemplary, some wanted students to back up specific proposed leadership strategies with references to research-based literature. We agreed that we had more work to do in this area before we, as a faculty, could make explicit our expectations for student evidence of content mastery.

Issues with Evaluation Rubrics

The next area of concern raised was with evaluation rubrics. Several themes emerged: (a) understanding the rubric, (b) subjective use of the rubric, and (c) the need for faculty to use the rubric for instruction. Each is discussed below.

Understanding the rubric. An initial concern was to make sure that each faculty member understood the proficiency criteria of the rubric. As we graded projects it was evident that our students had trouble grasping the explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge aspects of the rubric. Also, these data clearly show that these facets of understanding are not consistently understood among faculty. To norm these proficiency criteria, we need more conversations where we can share scores and discuss differences. When accomplished, we plan to provide students with exemplars for each of the cells in the evaluation rubrics and to design learning activities for students to apply these developmental criteria to their thinking and writing.

Subjective use of rubric. In addition to the variable levels of faculty understanding of our rubrics, we discovered a second type of error. Even with well-written and well-understood rubrics, room remains for some subjective interpretation and, therefore, the possibility of some inconsistency in grading. Our categories of proficiency build one upon the other. The first, second, and third levels of proficiency criteria each have one, three, and six facets of understanding which build cumulatively. What if a student had just four or five of the levels of understanding in the written product? How should that work be scored? When given an unclear choice, some used the overall impression of students' work to guide the choice of exemplary over proficient or proficient over exemplary. Others gave an exemplary score if even one of the final three levels of understanding (empathy, perspective, or self-knowledge) was present. We believe that more practice in scoring common student products, sharing results, and discussing the differences will reduce this type of error.

Use of rubric as teaching tool. Taking a developmental view, the grading rubric becomes a teaching tool. One of our ideas was to require that students use specific criteria elements of rubrics as headings in the construction

of their artifacts. Another was to help students work backwards from performance standards to ways those standards manifest themselves in the real-world context of local school environments. We decided to design learning activities that would ensure that students mastered standards and resulted in written evidence of them having done so. An additional task for future faculty meetings was to share ideas about how to achieve those objectives. All were willing to continue to work to refine the evaluation rubrics.

Making Sense of the Inter-Rater Reliability Scores

Faculty also gave their perceptions of the IRR statistics presented in Table 6. Some differences were easy to explain. Some pointed out that decimals caused non-agreement when in fact very little difference exists between a 2.7 and a 2.8 score. Others argued that, when faculty gave a score of 0 rather than a 1, 2, or 3, the result was statistically exaggerated toward non-agreement. Yet others called for another statistic to look at variance rather than a simple consensus measure. It is fair to say that we were disappointed and concerned about the elephant in our assessment parlor.

Still other faculty pondered causes for the lack of consensus. Some explanations were that (a) differences resulted from variable levels of rubric understanding, (b) differences in our use of the rubrics yielded different perceptions of student work, or (c) possible weaknesses in the discreteness of proficiency criteria—or in the application of those criteria.

Other comments fell into the category of recognition and acceptance of responsibility for these results. In spite of our best attempts, we do not have clear consensus on how we evaluate projects. What is clear to us, however, is why our students said they *wished we would get on the same page* with our expectations. Or, put another way, until we share common norms about the quality of student work, how can we expect students to meet program expectations?

Yet, another commented that we should be pleased with these data. Our current path should lead us to learn more about using these rubrics, or to consensus about what should be changed. Our program—unlike other more traditional programs that offer a disjointed collection of courses—provides students with a coherent curriculum achieved by integrating twelve projects with clinical practice expectations over four consecutive semesters. Our rubrics are robust and were constructed on conceptual frameworks of levels of understanding. If, instead, we had developed and used assessment instruments more narrowly defined and bounded by simplistic or concrete performance-criteria indicators, the resultant IRR statistics might have approach 100% and lulled us into thinking that our curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices were aligned and working well. We are reminded that, while consensus is the goal, high IRR statistics of value result from congruence in relevant curriculum, effective instruction, and well-designed and well-understood developmental assessments instruments.

SUMMARY

This project—our first attempt at collecting data on scoring student work—was a fruitful endeavor. We learned much. But lest the reader be tempted to conclude from a careful reading of this article that we have major problems with our performance assessments, we want to assure you that such a conclusion is in error. These assessments were developed in the field by instructional teams composed of principal partners and university professors. They were piloted and shared between school districts, each team making modifications and minor changes to customize the project to meet leadership needs of the partnering district. Our graduates tell us that they are well prepared for leadership and are using what they have learned in the program as they take on new leadership roles. Nevertheless, this study serves to initiate our faculty in the best practice of using inter-rater reliability statistics to provide us with opportunities to look more closely at what we do, why we do it, and where we may have missed the mark.

Thankfully, our students noted these problem areas along their journey and continued forward with their work. As for reaching our goals of developing program norms, determining possible adjustments to either projects or associated evaluation rubrics, and enhancing instructional strategies, we are clearly engaged in a process that will take us there. It is our shared intention to pursue and resolve the concerns that were raised in this study.

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Predictors of Success among Graduate Students of Introductory Statistics and Subsequent Interventions against Student Failure

Marcia L. Lamkin

In this age of data-based decision making and national accountability, programs of preparation for school leaders must provide adequate tools and comfortable access to the skills necessary to handle and present school data. Candidates for administrative certification need to be able to read and interpret statistical results about teacher qualification and student performance data as those results arrive from both state and federal agencies. Educational leaders must become familiar with the assumptions and output of the most frequently-used statistical tests and with the vocabulary inherent in each one. Further, these candidates need to be able to analyze and present the results from local data through the use of such computer software tools as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which focuses on quantitative analysis and N6 (formerly *Nud*ist*). SPSS is best suited for quantitative analysis, while N6 performs qualitative analysis of text data.

Two major obstacles to success exist for students of educational leadership in introductory statistics: the pervasive fear or anxiety about statistics as a discipline and the need for fluency with computer operations and with specialized statistical software.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The degree requirement for statistics coursework produces an almost universal anxiety among both undergraduate and graduate students in the social sciences (Schacht & Stewart, 1990; Zeidner, 1991). Many students nationwide delay the completion of a required statistics class (Roberts & Bilderback, 1980), and many students involved in the current study avoided the required statistics and research class until the end of their programs despite the fact that the course is one of only two that can be scheduled without academic prerequisite.

Recent research has focused on two primary sources for such avoidance —and for subsequent poor performance in the coursework. First, a handful of researchers have examined available methods of delivery for the statistics requirement, comparing computer-based, traditional, and combination delivery techniques in relationship to student attitudes and success. In 2000 and 2001, Kennedy and McCallister conducted two sequential studies to examine the relationships between instructional delivery methods in graduate statistics courses and student attitudes and academic success. In each of these studies, the researchers found no difference in student reaction or student performance based on participation in specific instructional delivery methods.

Kennedy and McCallister (2001) further studied the attitudes of graduate students who received instruction in statistics through a computer-based program. They did not report any students who completely changed their attitude toward statistics, only students who intensified their existing attitudes. Using the Statistics Attitude Survey developed by Roberts and Bilderback (1980), Kennedy and Broadston (2003) examined changes in attitude among students in a series of graduate statistics courses during which a self-paced computer program was employed for instruction. At the conclusion of this investigation, Kennedy and Broadston indicated that students became more convinced of the usefulness of statistical process, more confident in their use, less con-

cerned about math expertise, and less convinced that that statistics was too theoretical to be much use to “the average professional” (p. 10).

The second focus of research about graduate coursework in statistics has been the prevalence and effect of anxiety on student participation and performance. Omwuegbuzie and Seaman (1995) posited that statistics test anxiety, as a separate issue from either general test anxiety or math test anxiety, most negatively affected graduate student performance in statistics coursework. “However, researchers (Bridgeman, 1980; Caudery, 1980; Evans & Reilly, 1972; Reilly & Evans, 1974; Wild, Durso & Rubin, 1982; Wright, 1984) have found that increasing examination time has little or no effect on student performance” (p. 116) in graduate statistics classes. Omwuegbuzie and Seaman (1995) found in their research that anxiety about statistics testing had a significant effect on student performance. In a subsequent study, Omwuegbuzie (2000) noted that procrastination on statistics course assignments was the result of anxiety and content aversion to anticipated statistics materials. He recommended that steps be taken to reduce anxiety in order to alleviate procrastination and other negative academic behaviors.

Wilson (1997) examined factors that potentially could cause anxiety among graduate students in a required statistics course. As with previous studies, however, more than half (50%) of the variance in anxiety scores remained unexplained, even through a combination of factors. At that time, Wilson recommended a variety of supportive academic actions to foster increased success among graduate students in statistics coursework, including background training in specific math functions and in the use of calculators or computer systems. Wilson also recommended the incorporation of “those strategies that students suggest for reducing anxiety” (p. 20).

Wilson (1998) went on to field test strategies in her classroom. She measured students’ initial anxiety in graduate statistics courses, used a variety of strategies drawn from the literature and from previous students, and re-measured students’ anxiety. Wilson concluded that “it is possible to reduce the anxiety of graduate students in educational research courses” (p. 8), but the lack of control group and the wide spectrum of strategies precluded specific recommendations based on this study.

METHODS AND RESULTS

As early as possible each semester in the introductory statistics course, the professor needs to employ a predictive tool in order that intervention can be offered to students who demonstrate a propensity not to overcome the obstacles of anxiety about statistical processes and lack of fluency with computer software. The more disparate the results of the predictive assignment, the more intervention options should be offered. During four sequential semesters in the educational leadership program at a large mid-south public university, the professor for Introduction to Statistics and Research gathered and maintained data about student performance from start to end of each semester. Approximately 50 graduate students from various degree programs were involved in the classes each semester, making the total sample approximately 200 graduate students.

During the first semester of data collection, the first written non-exam assessment provided the predictor of overall student performance in the course. Data gathered from these students included gender; number of total graduate credits at start of the semester; end date of most recent math class; and all grades on embedded assignments, papers, and exams. Correlations were first run among all the variables, followed by regression analyses of statistically significant relationships. The results of regression analysis indicated clearly ($R=.436$; 19% accuracy of prediction) that the first written non-exam grade consistently predicted the total points earned in the course and therefore predicted the students’ final grades ($p < .05$).

During the following semester, the professor intervened through the use of embedded assignments at different levels of difficulty and through supplemental specific instructions for the completion of both guided and independent practices with statistical processes. Embedded assignments were completed during class meetings when the professor had the opportunity to correct errors before problems became routine, and these assignments were differentiated to accommodate individual student’s abilities. Further, the textbook for the course was changed to a book that focused less on mathematical computation, less on the technicalities of statistical operations, more on the software to be used in the computer lab, and more on humorous examples of statistical processes. Assessment instruments and data gathered from these students remained the same as during the first semester. Correlations were again run, followed by regression analysis of statistically significant relationships. During this second semester, after limited interventions, the results of the regression analysis again indicated

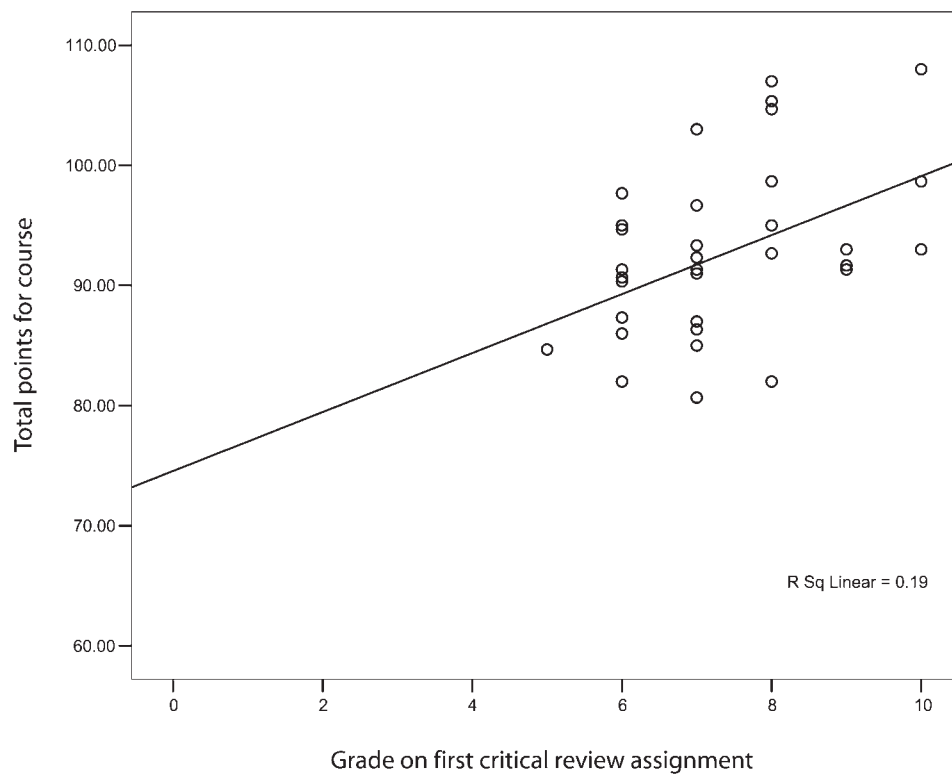


Figure 1. Scatterplot of first semester relationship between Total points earned in course and Grade on first critical review assignment, with line of best fit.

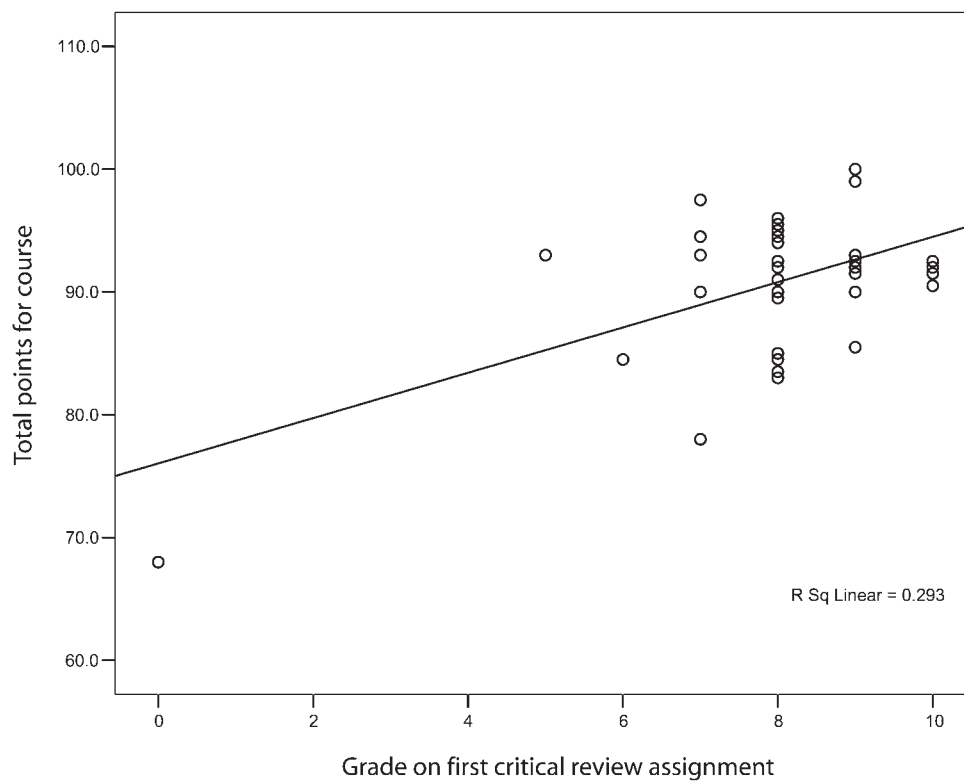


Figure 2. Scatterplot of second semester relationship between Total points earned in course and Grade on first critical review assignment, with line of best fit.

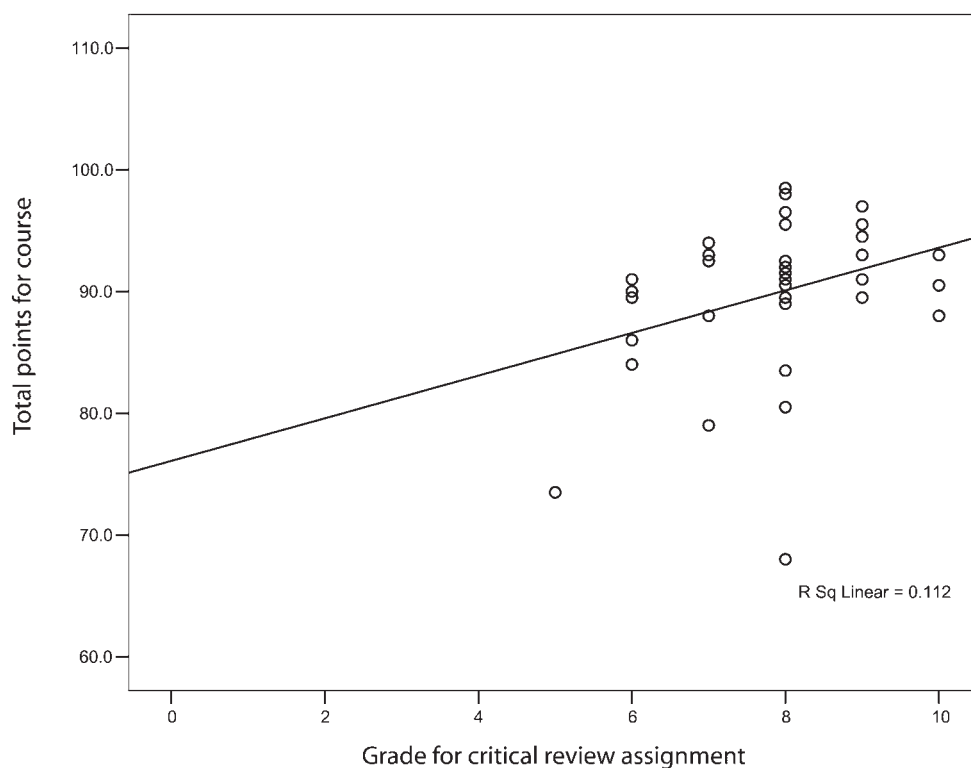


Figure 3. Scatterplot of fourth semester relationship between Total points earned in course and Grade on first critical review assignment, with line of best fit.

($R=.542$; 29.3% accuracy of prediction) that the first non-exam grade predicted overall achievement in the course ($p < .05$).

In third and fourth semesters of the same course, the professor expanded the available interventions to include individualized assignments and line-by-line editing of written rough drafts of critical reviews and statistical analyses. All guidance documents plus answer keys for each embedded classroom activity were posted to an online instructional service for students to access and print at will. Between class meetings, the professor assigned individualized independent practices based on each student's progress and questions. The results of subsequent regression analysis ($p = .043$) indicated that the predictive value of the first non-exam written assignment continued to decrease, but all students reported that they had achieved their desired outcomes for their performance in the class. Prediction and subsequent intervention appeared to have reduced or eliminated performance gaps based on fear of statistics and lack of fluency with computer software.

DISCUSSION

The gradual change in instructional strategies during four sequential semesters of Introduction to Statistics and Research appeared to reduce student anxiety about the course, increase student success with required materials, and nearly eliminate the predictive value of an assignment toward eventual academic outcomes for students. These results concurred with and extended the work completed by Wilson (1997, 1998) that focused on and field tested instructional strategies for graduate statistics courses. One of this professor's goals remained the elimination of the predictive power of any single element in order to demonstrate the possibility for more universal student success in introductory statistics coursework.

The professor of these classes bore in this case, and should continue to bear, the responsibility to determine student readiness for the course materials and to measure student progress from lesson to lesson. Through the use of tools that they have at their fingertips, such instructors need to keep careful records over time, identify results that provide accurate predictions about student success, and intervene as necessary to assist students to overcome obstacles and master the skills necessary for both school building and school district leadership.

This professor monitored gender, hours of graduate study up to the statistics class, date of each student's most recent mathematics class, and performance on each cognitive task during the statistics classes. In keeping with the findings of a number of researchers (Bridgeman, 1980; Caudery, 1980; Evans & Reilly, 1972; Reilly & Evans, 1974; Wild, Durso & Rubin, 1982; Wright, 1984 as cited in Omwuegbuzie & Seaman, 1995) that adjustments to examination method or timing made no difference in students' anxiety or performance, no single factor except the grade on the first non-examination assignment showed any predictive power toward course success. The interventions chosen by the professor were based on the scant literature about experiments in differentiation and the use of humor in statistics classes and on her own past experiences in the classroom. Although a large percentage of the variance in performance remained unexplained, many students in the classes appeared to have benefited by the changes implemented by this professor and spoke favorably about the changes.

The results of this investigation suggested that graduate students in programs that require statistics competencies should be required to master skills in computer fluency before they attempt the course in statistics. Students in the courses included in this research lacked skill not only with statistical software but also with basic spreadsheets and word processing software: some stress and some difficulty could have been alleviated by prerequisite training in those areas.

These results highlighted two issues that should be further investigated. First, the issue of teacher comfort with instructional techniques such as differentiation and cooperative learning should be explored. The professor involved in this research had extensive experience and had developed a high level of comfort with differentiation and cooperative learning, but teachers should be offered the opportunity to master such teaching strategies before attempting to use them in statistics classrooms. Secondly, the issue of communication between professors of statistics at the graduate level and their students should be investigated. Student information about topics that cause particular difficulty and about methods that promote academic progress could benefit teachers as they develop and modify statistics courses: such communication should be valued and nurtured without compromising the demands of course content.

At the heart of these inquiries lies the question, "Do I teach to a set of materials, or do I teach for student progress?" If we teach for student progress, then we need to take steps to address student anxiety and to improve student fluency with content materials and with related computer software. Differentiation of instruction can easily be implemented in laboratory classrooms such as the computer lab. Each student's progress can be monitored separately to ensure that each one masters as many statistical and research skills as possible. Instructors who intervene on their students' behalf can reduce anxiety about statistics as a discipline, increase fluency with computer software programs, and improve comprehension and application of statistical processes.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR FIELD PRACTITIONERS

Implementing Best Practices in the Classroom: What do Administrators Need to do to Change Teacher Behavior?

Nancy Carlson and Jane Irons

Providing leadership for changing teacher behavior is challenging. In general, teachers teach the way they were taught (Archer, 1998). Consequently, many teachers still cling to traditional methods using teacher-directed methods, particularly at the middle and high school levels. This paper reports on a three-year project, called Project TEACH, which implemented learning styles methods in a dominantly Hispanic urban middle school. The project was funded through a grant provided by the Sid Richardson Foundation. The success of Project TEACH focused around the leadership and support provided to teacher participants by the project coordinator.

The school was considered low performing with a student population of about 1,000 students, primarily Hispanic (78%) (Texas Education Agency, 2001). The teacher turnover rate was over 32% per year (TEA). Many new teachers received their teacher certification through alternative or non-traditional programs. Specific classes addressing teaching methods is usually not part of alternative certification programs so that alternatively certified teachers may not be exposed to a variety of teaching methods recommended by best practices for at-risk students.

Best practices for at-risk students include a teaching faculty well trained in pedagogy. A number of researchers have documented that a well-trained teacher has the greatest impact on a student's achievement, more so than socioeconomic status, race, class size, and classroom grouping (Archer, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Sanders, 1998; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Videro, 2005). The current focus of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) places teachers directly at the center of the student learning equation so that teacher behavior becomes important and leadership for teachers becomes significant.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Styles Model

The theoretical model is the learning styles model of Dunn (1990a; 1990b; 1990c; Dunn & Dunn, 1992; Dunn & Griggs, 1990, 1998; Griggs & Dunn, 1995, 1996). Learning preferences, according to Dunn & Dunn (1992), are the ways in which each individual begins to concentrate on, process, and retain new and difficult information. In particular, the Dunn and Dunn model focuses upon environmental preferences (e.g., lighting, temperature, sound), emotional factors (e.g., motivation, responsibility), sociological (e.g., self-, group-, or peer-oriented), and physical needs (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile), and incorporates these factors into individual learning styles. Dunn and associates conducted numerous studies on the learning style characteristics of selected racial and ethnic groups as well as multiculturalism and learning styles of adolescents (Dunn & Griggs, 1990; 1993; 1998).

Teaching Styles

Teaching styles, according to Renzulli and Smith (1978), are the ways teachers organize their classrooms, plan and use methods of instruction, and design learning experiences. Staff development enhancing teacher awareness of their own learning preferences and the characteristics of the components of the Dunn and Dunn model of student learning were found effective in changing teacher behavior (Dunn, 1990c; Dunn 1993; Dunn & Griggs, 1995). Other authors (Little, 1993; Smith, 2001) have found that high quality professional development should encourage teacher collaboration and willingness to initiate new strategies.

Professional Development

With implementation of NCLB, there is a new focus on teacher training and professional development. NCLB focuses on the recognition that teachers are the driving force behind student learning gains (Viadero, 2005). Guskey (2003) reviewed 13 lists of characteristics of effective professional development from professional organizations, including the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the National Institute of Science Education (NISE). These research-based lists were generated from surveys seeking opinions about effective professional development from educators and researchers in education. Results of the NISE and Educational Testing Service (ETS) studies indicate a direct link between identified characteristics of professional development and student achievement (Guskey, 2003).

Foster (2004) and Guskey (2003) found that helping teachers understand at deeper levels the content they teach, and the ways students learn that content, appears to be vital to dimensions of effective professional development. Related to this, Kelleher (2003) found that teachers need time to deepen their understanding, analyze student work, and develop new approaches to instruction. Teachers value opportunities to work together, reflect on their practice, exchange ideas, and share strategies (Foster, 2004; Guskey, 2003). For collaboration to be effective, it needs to be structured, purposeful, and efforts guided by clear goals for improving student learning (Kelleher, 2003; Foster, 2004).

Guskey (2003) found most lists of characteristics of effective professional development align with other reform initiatives and emphasize high quality instruction. Implementation of NCLB has increased the emphasis on student and teacher accountability stemming from a growing awareness of the need to gather formative information to guide student improvement (Guskey, 2003).

Staff and professional development takes many forms, including workshops, inservice meetings, after-school meetings, mentoring, graduate courses, and district-sponsored classes. Kelleher (2003, p. 75) noted that teacher workshops and faculty meetings with guest speakers have been criticized as “adult pull-out programs.” However, such professional development activities may not be connected to campus or district goals, often have no follow-up, and tend to amount to a series of disjointed experiences that do not have any observable effect on student learning (Kelleher, 2003). While Guskey (2003) noted that most professional organizations listed site-based professional development as a major characteristic of professional development, Kelleher (2003) suggested that teachers have insufficient time and skills to be able to develop new teaching strategies based solely on what they have learned from conferences, workshops, or other sessions. Consequently, the most effective professional development strategies include activities that are on-going, involve daily contact, and use consistent follow-up. Both Kelleher and Guskey recognized that effective professional development must be imbedded in the teacher’s daily work to improve student learning.

Shift in Focus of Professional Development

Implementation of NCLB underscored the need for professional development for career and newly graduated teachers. Recently, the National Staff Development Council called for a shift in approaching professional development and recommended devoting 10% of a school budget and 25% of teacher time to professional development to improve student performance in hard-to-staff schools (Kelleher, 2003). Foster (2004) examined the concept of improving the achievement of low income students by enhancing the competence and performance of teachers who were already working in the nation’s neediest schools. She found that urban schools have difficulty attracting high quality teachers and hire a large number of uncertified and unprepared teachers.

Thus, high-need urban schools have the highest concentration of low income, low achieving students of color, and the greatest share of inexperienced and under qualified teachers, as well as the highest rates of teacher turnover (Foster, 2004; Cortise & Zastrow, 2005).

NCLB has inspired schools to focus on improving student achievement through rigorous curriculum and accountability. Some schools adopt scripted teacher-proof curriculum. Narrowly focused professional development accompanies such curriculum. Foster (2004) noted that teachers in urban schools serving disadvantaged students had little opportunity to observe good practice with working class urban African American students. This has led some researchers to agree that improving and sustaining the achievement gap of urban disadvantaged students depends on the teacher's ability to develop and maintain productive relationships with students (Foster, 2004; Kelleher, 2003). The research suggests student-teacher relationships provide a basis for student motivation and a means to establish and maintain classroom discipline and management (Foster, 2004).

Cyclic Model of Professional Development

A cyclic model of professional development was identified by Foster as an effective developmental model called "Learning through Teaching" in an after school pedagogical laboratory (L-TAPL). Its characteristics include: being site-based, providing opportunities to observe a master teacher, implementing new teaching practices in classrooms, and participating in collaborative discussions of the attempts at new teaching practices with colleagues. An important component of this professional development model was the opportunity to repeat the cycle under supervision and guidance from educational leaders.

Summary

The review of current literature reveals that improved teacher training and professional development has become an important focus of school leaders. Administrators and educational leaders look for models of professional development that promote success in the classroom. Well trained teachers are the foundation of good teaching and effective student learning. Teachers who are aware of their teaching styles and students' learning styles are more able to meet students' specific learning needs. Effective professional development programs use the cyclic model of professional development where teachers receive on-site, ongoing, and consistent training in effective teaching practices. Project TEACH used the cyclic model of professional development where training and support was provided to administrators and teachers on-site, weekly over three years, resulting in changes in teacher behavior of implementing new and effective teaching practices that impacted student achievement.

METHOD

With the common goal of improving student achievement in reading, English/Language Arts, and mathematics, the researchers and school administrators implemented a longitudinal three-year study focusing upon yearly faculty development, one-on-one teacher assistance, supplemental materials, and use of instructional aides at one school campus. This school was paired with another middle school in the district with closely matched demographic makeup for a comparison group. To facilitate learning style strategy implementation, teachers were provided individual student learning style profiles and a class learning style profile for each of the seven classes taught each day. The project coordinator met with teacher participants on a weekly basis.

Model

The Dunn & Dunn Learning Styles approach to professional development encompasses a cyclic model similar to Foster's L-TAPL model. The Dunn & Dunn Learning Styles model uses teaching techniques that are designed to meet students' specific learning needs by identifying and understanding students' learning styles or preferences and using teaching strategies to meet these learning styles or preferences (Dunn & Dunn, 1992). The Dunn and Dunn model uses a Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) (Price & Dunn, 1997) and the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS) (Dunn, Dunn, & Price, 1996) to identify individual elements that af-

fect learning. The learning elements are categorized into four areas including: environmental (e.g., light, sound), emotionality (e.g., motivation, persistence), social preferences (e.g., group, individual work), and physiological uniqueness (e.g., auditory, visual, intake, mobility) (Dunn, 1993).

Participants

The participants in this study were teachers and students in an urban middle school in a large southwest city. The study was conducted over three years and included all students in grade 7 during the first year and all students in grades 7 and 8 during the second and third years. The students in this project represented an at-risk population (see Table 1) for academic and school failure. The school had a high minority population, more than half of whom met the criteria for economically disadvantaged. Many students had limited English proficiency. For comparison of data, another middle school was found in the district with closely matched demographic data (see Table 1). Learning styles of the students at the project school were identified using the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI). Teachers' learning preferences were identified through the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS).

Materials

Based on the results of the LSI, individual student learning profiles were printed identifying the individual learning preferences of each student. The learning preferences of each student were then aggregated into a class profile for each of the seven classes for all eight periods for each teacher. The class profiles were bound into a booklet containing a learning styles profile for each class period for each of the 55 teachers. Matching teaching strategies were identified to correspond with the dominant student learning styles of each class for each teacher. Teachers were to apply the identified teaching strategies that corresponded with the class's dominant learning styles. Teachers were asked to write comments on student behavior and progress when teaching strategies based on the identified learning styles of the students in their classes were used. A set of comprehensive notebooks was given to the principal containing the class profiles. Two notebooks were provided to the principal: one sorted by teacher and one sorted by period, each containing the class learning style profiles and teaching strategies for all teachers.

Teacher Training

Support was provided to teachers through training and support personnel available to the teachers in their classrooms. Two instructional aides were hired to work with the teachers to create and produce learning materi-

Table 1. Demographic Data for Project Middle School and Comparison Middle School.

Characteristic	Project School		Comparison School	
	1999–2000	2000–2001	1999–2000	2000–2001
Ethnic group				
Hispanic	77%	78%	79%	82%
African-American	14%	12%	15%	14%
White	7%	7%	6%	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	3%	<1%	<1%
Native American	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%
Mobility	26%	25%	26%	26%
Economically Disadvantaged	81%	82%	77%	83%
Limited English Proficient	48%	46%	43%	38%
Disciplinary Placements	8.3%	5.2%	3.7%	3.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency (2001).

als and manipulatives. Under the teachers' direction, the aides provided tutoring and assistance to students. Teachers were provided two full days of professional development inservice during each of the three years. Training focused on students' learning styles and teaching strategies for maximizing student achievement through teaching strategies designed for specific learning styles elements. Ongoing, weekly individual support was provided by the project coordinator and program director to 34 of the teachers who became directly involved with the project. The project coordinator was on site an average of two? days per week to meet individually and with groups of teachers.

Each week, teachers were given opportunities to discuss the impact of applying specific teaching strategies in their classes based on dominant learning styles. Teachers discussed, and then recorded in the learning styles profile booklets, any changes and impact the teaching strategies had on their students. Teachers worked in groups to collaborate on how teaching strategies were used and the impact the strategies had on their students. Various teaching strategies for the teachers were modeled by the project coordinator. The project coordinator was asked by teachers to attend their classes to observe and comment on ways the teaching strategies were applied. Individual meetings were held weekly with the principal and two assistant principals to discuss implementing the teaching strategies based on the learning styles profiles of the classes. Principals were provided mentoring and training on supervision of their teachers. The principals found that they were able, in new and different ways, to support their teachers as new teaching strategies were implemented.

The characteristics of the cyclic model of professional development, i.e., being site-based, observing demonstrations from a master teacher, practicing and implementing new teaching strategies, and collaborating with colleagues on results of the practice, were reinforced weekly. Teachers were given opportunities to practice and repeat their successes of using new and effective teaching strategies throughout the three year period.

RESULTS

Teacher interviews, classroom observation, and analysis of student achievement data demonstrated the impact of the project on teacher behavior and student achievement. Teachers responded by writing comments in their class profile booklets after making observations of students' behavior. Examination of the impact of cyclic professional development on academic performance of at-risk students was done through analysis of standardized achievement data for the project school and with a comparison school. The results were obtained in mixed format using both quantitative and quantitative data.

Teacher Response

Written comments from teachers recorded in the class profile booklets indicated that students were more successful in classrooms where teachers understood their own teaching styles and understood the various learning style needs of students in each class. Teachers' comments report that students were more receptive and responded more positively when specific learning styles factors, i.e., best practices such as lower lights, background music, shortened instructional segments, cooperative groupings, partner activities, manipulatives, learning centers, and active learning projects, were incorporated into learning activities. One teacher wrote, "... overall students did very well in my social studies course. At-risk Hispanic students achieved a 71% passing rate for the state assessment. For the history of (this school), this is a *record* score. Not too many, if any, have reached this high a level."

When learning styles factors such as low lights, cool temperature, allowing students greater responsibility, and informal classroom arrangement were used, a reading teacher wrote, "(the students are) calmer and more receptive to instruction; (they are) more awake and attentive; (they have) better group project results, and (students are) motivated to show good behavior to get the privilege of sitting on beanbags." Teachers' awareness of their own learning styles enabled them to change their teaching behavior to meet the learning needs of their students.

Academic Impact

In a pretest-posttest quasiexperimental design, significant difference was found using a paired sample t test

Table 2. Comparison of Mean Scores on SAT9 Language Arts Achievement Tests for All Students.

Paired Sample <i>t</i> Tests Statistics and Correlation							
Variables		<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE of Mean</i>
Language Arts 00		325	.020	.726	560.66	200.08	11.10
Language Arts 01					599.02	175.41	9.73
Paired Samples Test							
					<i>2-tailed</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval</i>	
<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE Mean</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>lower</i>	<i>upper</i>
−38.36	263.49	14.62	−2.625	324	.009	−67.11	−9.61

and independent *t* test between standardized achievement test scores for students at the project school. Significant difference was found using ANOVA 2 X 2 and independent *t* test in favor of the project school over the comparison school on standardized achievement test scores. Results suggested that eighth grade Hispanic students made significant gains in language arts, as did females in math, after teachers were trained and implemented best practice learning style strategies in their classrooms.

Academic achievement scores were analyzed after implementation of the teaching strategies. Academic achievement score results indicated, when mean scores for all students (combined boys and girls) in Grade 7 (pretest) were compared to all students in Grade 8 (posttest), a significant difference ($p = .009$) was found for all students in Language Arts using a paired-sample *t* test, $t(324) = -2.625$, $p = .009$ (see Table 2).

Academic achievement scores for two school years were compared to a comparison school. When mean scores of boys and girls in Grade 8 at the project school were compared to boys and girls in Grade 8 at the comparison school in Language Arts using an ANOVA 2 X 2, a significant effect was found at the .46 level for gender, indicating that girls performed better than boys in Language Arts achievement. There was no significant effect for Language Arts achievement scores, $F(3, 195) = 6.453$, $p = .001$ (see Table 3). When mean scores for all students at the project school in Grade 8 were compared to all students in Grade 8 at the comparison school, a significant difference ($p = .001$) was found in mean scores in Language Arts in favor of the project school using an independent *t* test, $t(180.634) = -4.92$, $p = .001$ (see Table 4).

Overall, Language Arts emerged significant. Students made significant gains in academic achievement in Language Arts from Grade 7 to Grade 8. Gender differences were significant overall for girls who outperformed boys in Language Arts. Significant differences were found when Language Arts scores were compared with a comparison school, in favor of the project school. Gender differences emerged for girls when scores were compared with the comparison school in Language Arts. Hispanic girls demonstrated significant academic gain in Language Arts achievement when learning styles teacher training and teaching strategies were used.

Table 3. Comparison Between Project Middle School and Comparison Middle School.

Comparison of Mean Scores on SAT9 Language Arts Achievement Tests			
Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model	3	6.453	.001
Gender	1	16.380	.001
School	1	2.813	.095
School X Gender	1	.533	.466
Error	192		
Corrected Total	195		

Table 4. Comparison of Mean Scores on SAT9 Language Arts Achievement Test Between Students at the Project Middle School and Comparison Middle School.

Independent Samples Statistics and Correlation							
Dependent Variable		Grouping Variable		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE of Mean</i>
Language Arts		Project School		127	617.37	140.90	12.50
		Comparison School		127	474.56	295.03	26.18
<i>t</i> Test for Equity of Means							
Variances		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>2-tailed Sig.</i>	<i>Mean Diff</i>	<i>SE of Diff</i>	<div><i>95% Confidence Interval</i><div><i>lower</i><i>upper</i></div></div>
Unequal		−4.923	180.63	.001	-142.81	29.01	−200.06−85.57

Teacher Survey Results

An survey was given to 55 teachers at the project school to gather opinions regarding the teacher's learning style and the students' learning styles and the effect, if any, it had on the teaching strategies the teacher used in the classroom. The return rate was 84%. 78% of the teachers reported that they had changed their teaching style to meet the needs of their students. 78% of the teachers reported that knowing the learning style of their students helped them in planning lessons and learning activities for students in their classes. 70% of the teachers reported that it was very important for them to receive the learning styles information and corresponding teaching strategies suggestions found in the class learning styles profile booklets. 85% of the teachers reported that it made a difference in their teaching strategies to know their learning preferences and their students' learning preferences. These teachers' comments directly support the findings of Foster, Guskey, and Kelleher that a vital component of effective professional development is for teachers to understand the ways students learn.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Project TEACH demonstrated a model of professional development that changed teacher behavior for more effective teaching practices. Administrators and educational leaders seek models of professional development that provide for improving relationships within the school, promote collegiality among the staff, and impact teaching practices for improved student performance. This project emphasized consistency of training and support for teachers; it modeled strong teaching demonstrations with collaboration between teachers, administrators, and trainers; and it emphasized the need for ongoing, on site, individual and group support for teachers over time for strengthening their understanding of effective teaching practices.

The impact of the cyclic model of professional development at this school was demonstrated through changes teachers made in their teaching strategies. Long-term, ongoing, site-based teacher training provided by the project coordinator allowed opportunities for deep learning of teaching strategies to meet specific learning needs of at-risk student. Comments from teachers indicated that the majority changed their teaching styles to meet the needs of their students. The teacher comments directly support current literature in providing effective professional development to teachers and administrators. The majority of teachers reported that they had improved their ability to plan lessons and implement learning activities for students' specific learning needs. In addition, the majority of teachers reported that it made a difference in their teaching abilities to have ongoing support and training on teaching strategies and learning preferences.

Implications for Teacher Training

By using a cyclic model of professional development, where support was on-site and weekly for an extended

period of time, teachers observed a master teacher and were trained in new teaching practices. Under ongoing supervision, teachers implemented new teaching practices in their classrooms. Teachers were provided opportunities for collaboration and ongoing support through discussion, mentoring, coaching, and modeling when they implemented new teaching practices. Based on the results of this study we recommend professional development for teachers that includes opportunities for teachers to

- develop deeper understanding of effective teaching strategies through ongoing, daily support.
- demonstrate effective teaching practices that are modeled in their classrooms.
- collaborate, work together, build relationships, and share ideas and teaching strategies.
- reflect on their teaching practices and support each other in improving teaching abilities.

Implications for Leadership Training

This study has implications for administrators who must be instructional leaders in their schools and provide support and assistance to teachers for implementing best practices that can impact student achievement. Strong leaders seek professional development that fosters collaboration and learning environments designed to meet students' specific needs. Based on the results of this study, we recommend the following components of professional development for administrators. The educational leaders should

- receive long-term, ongoing, personal support through consultation with other educational leaders on effective professional development and effective teaching practices.
- support teachers to implement effective teaching strategies to meet specific student learning needs for at-risk students.
- foster growth for individual teachers and teachers as working groups.
- support development of relationships and collegiality through collaboration between teachers on developing lesson plans and teaching strategies.
- provide opportunities for teachers to observe and implement effective teaching strategies through new and innovative activities.
- recognize that changes in teacher behavior take time and support of long-term investment in professional development.

In this study, administrators endorsed ongoing, one-on-one support to individual teachers and groups of teachers to build strong relationships and collegiality. They understood the necessity to continually repeat the process and supported the cyclic model of professional development for the benefit of individual teachers and faculty as a whole, so that the teachers' understanding of effective teaching practices was continually strengthened.

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Tenured Teacher Dismissal for Incompetence and the Law: Administrators, *What are you Afraid of?*

Marguerita K. DeSander and Michael F. DiPaola

INTRODUCTION

“We propose an audacious goal . . . by the year 2006, America will provide all students in the country with what should be their educational birthright: access to competent, caring, and qualified teachers.”

—*What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future*,
National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996)

A common misconception is that tenure precludes school districts from effectively dealing with teacher incompetence by protecting teachers through due process requirements. The focus of this chapter is to discuss the principal’s role in determining and dismissing incompetent teachers. During the early years of public education in the United States, teachers were dismissed from their duties for a variety of reasons. Some reasons such as incompetence, insubordination and immorality are considered legally viable; other reasons, such as social relationships, marital status, maternity, religion, public comments, and teaching style are considered *arbitrary and capricious* (Alexander & Alexander, 1995). Thus, every state promulgated tenure laws providing teaching professionals with a vested property interest in their job, as a protective measure to thwart the efforts of school boards to dismiss teachers in a more fair manner (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; Bridges, 1990; Fischer, Schimmel, & Stellman, 2003; Imber & van Geel, 1993; LaMorte, 1995; McCarthy, Cambron-McCabe, & Thomas, 2004; Valente, 1998; Yudof, Kirp, Imber, van Geel, & Levin, 1982). Tenure provides public school teachers with two essential rights: (a) a vested property interest in continued employment; and, (b) due process rights in the event that a school district chooses to deny continued employment. “Tenure laws are designed to assure competent teachers continued employment as long as their performance is satisfactory” (McCarthy & Cambron-McCabe, 1992, p. 387). It is *not* a guarantee of permanent employment for the teacher.

Likewise, every state has enacted legislation that provides grounds for dismissing tenured teachers (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; Fischer, et al., 2003; Imber & van Geel, 1993; LaMorte, 1995; Valente, 1998; Yudof, et al., 1982); however, the grounds vary significantly among the states ranging from a broad all-inclusive statement of “good and just cause” to a highly detailed list of specific grounds for dismissal (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; McCarthy et al., 2004). Articulating clearly defined legal grounds for dismissal is important, in that it provides school districts with a means to lawfully dismiss teachers and withstand the rigors of legal scrutiny (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; Fischer, et al., 2003; LaMorte, 1995; Rebore, 1995). Yet, despite codified law, teachers still look to the courts for redress of school district disciplinary and dismissal actions. It is the body of laws, both codified and case law, that provides the basis for current thinking and best practices regarding tenured teacher dismissal for incompetence.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND FEDERAL INTERVENTION

For more than 20 years, the focus of reform efforts has shifted from matters of access and equity in education to matters of teacher accountability and quality of instruction, or “excellence” and “restructuring” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). This shift was first realized with the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, a report that catapulted teacher accountability and quality of instruction to the forefront of the most recent reform movement (Cohen & Murnane, 1986; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Sadowski & Miller, 1996).

Although noble in its endeavor, the criticism of the state of education pronounced by *A Nation at Risk* and its call for excellence generated few, if any, concrete strategies for improvement. The reform initiative commenced in the 1980s sparked an excellence movement that evolved in the 1990s to an era of educational restructuring (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The dissemination of the 1996 report *What Matter Most: Teaching for America's Future* further solidified the direction of reform initiatives by heightening the scrutiny of the competence of the teaching profession and developing strategies for improving education. The legislative progeny of the restructuring movement included a plethora of federal initiatives, including: Goals 2000, Educate America Act of 1994; Improving America's Schools Act of 1994; IDEA (amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997).

Most recently, the federal government passed the single largest educational reform initiative of modern time, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). This law not only raised the bar on teacher quality and accountability by ensuring that *all* teaching professionals are “highly qualified,” but in addition provided sanctions for school districts that fail to achieve prescribed levels of student performance.

Federal intervention in the enterprise of education is viewed by some as the primary means to bring about desired changes in educational system (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Meyen & Skrtic, 1995). Others, like Elmore (2002), posit that the federal role in education is nothing more than politics as usual—and, “that political decisions and actions are the result of competing groups with different resources and capacities vying for influence in a constitutional system that encourages conflict as an antidote to the concentration of power” (p. 2). Regardless of whether or not one embraces the educational reform movement and federal involvement in education, teacher accountability and quality of instruction remain issues not likely to move off the radar screen of the enterprise of public education in the near future.

TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY, QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION, AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

We *know* good teaching matters. We *know* that good teachers have “the ability to make a difference in students' lives” (Stronge & Tucker, 2000, p. 1). We *know* the empirical evidence supports the assertion that good teachers have a significant impact on student learning (for example: Cawelti, 1999; Johnston, 1999; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Schalock & Schalock, 1993; Stronge & Tucker, 2000; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). And, we *know* that teachers who are “certified in the subjects they teach” have enjoyed greater levels of student achievement than teachers who are not certified (Stronge & Tucker, 2000, p. 2). Student learning is *the* outcome for measuring successful teaching (Cawelti, 1999; Johnston, 1999; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Schalock & Schalock, 1993; Stronge & Tucker, 2000; Wright, et al., 1997). Teachers, like other professionals, must be held accountable for the outcomes of their efforts. Incompetence in the teaching profession, when identified, *must* be addressed with action (Bridges & Groves, 1990). Indeed, incompetent teacher performance garners more significant public criticism than any other profession (Neill & Custis, 1978; Painter, 2000; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, & Chamberlin, 2000).

Research conducted by Wright and colleagues (1997) found that “the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher” (p. 63). That assertion was substantiated through later research by Sanders and Horn (1998), who found that “students assigned to ineffective teachers continue to show the effects of such teachers even when these students are assigned to very effective teachers in subsequent years” (pp. 253–254). Simply stated, teacher incompetence has profound, prolonged, and staggering effects on student achievement.

Incompetent tenured teachers exist in virtually every school district across the country (Bridges, 1986a, 1986b, Ellis, 1984; Fuhr, 1993; McGrath, 1995; Tucker, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1993; Ward, 1995). Anecdotal information suggests that some school districts: (a) elect to ignore the problem and allow the

teachers to continue to teach; (b) attempt to minimize the problem through reassignment or transfer of the teachers to other non-instructional positions; or (c) encourage incompetent tenured teachers to seek teaching jobs in other districts, thereby passing the problem onto someone else. Conversely, some school districts have addressed the problem of tenured teacher incompetence straight-on and moved to dismiss the teachers from their position.

Although teacher accountability, quality of instruction and student achievement remain central themes in the contemporary educational literature due to reform efforts in recent decades (Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Frase & Streshly, 2000; Tucker, 1997), dismissing incompetent tenured teachers continues to present a host of challenges for school districts, despite statutory guidelines and case law precedents (Whitaker, 2002). The truth is that many administrators hide behind the “iron curtain” of tenure, perceiving it as a mechanism that precludes dismissing the incompetent teacher, rather than a safeguard to prevent the dismissal of competent teachers for arbitrary and capricious reasons.

According to research on teacher quality and accountability, 5–15% of teaching professionals are marginal or incompetent in the classroom (Bridges, 1986a, 1986b; Ellis, 1984; Frase & Streshly, 2000; Fuhr, 1993; McGrath, 1993; McGrath, 1995; Tucker, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1993; Ward, 1995). That percentage translates into 120,000–360,000 classroom teachers who are marginal performers nationwide.

While research on teacher quality and accountability has demonstrated that poor performing teachers have detrimental effects on the students they serve extending more than five years after they have taught them (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright et al., 1997), the research on teacher quality and accountability demonstrates that less than one half of one percent of public school teachers are terminated annually for incompetence and/or poor performance (Tucker, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1993). The disparity between the estimated numbers of incompetent classroom teachers and the actual numbers of teachers dismissed annually for incompetence is alarming in light of the demonstrated detrimental effects incompetent teachers have on student achievement. Indeed, this disparity may also justify the explosion of federal legislation as it relates to the enterprise of education.

Almost 20 years after the release of *A Nation at Risk*, federal, state and local education agencies continue to struggle with teacher competency, as evidenced by the most recent enactment of federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). Hailed by some as perhaps the most significant piece of federal legislation ever enacted in education (Elmore, 2002), the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) mandates that all teachers must meet the standard of “highly qualified.” The Act defines highly qualified to mean meeting each state’s requirements for teacher certification under teacher licensure guidelines. In theory, teachers who fail to meet the requirements of “highly qualified” under the act could be terminated for cause based upon incompetence. In practice, however, state tenure laws and due process safeguards will most likely override the provisions of No Child Left Behind, as the evidence necessary to prevail in cases of dismissal for incompetence may not exist, preventing the action from surviving the rigors of court scrutiny.

INCOMPETENCE AND THE TENURE TRAP

Black’s Law Dictionary (Black, 1990) defines the term “incompetence”: “lack of ability, legal qualifications, or fitness to discharge the required duty” (p. 765). Although it appears to be vague and overbroad, this definition is relied upon by the courts for review of litigation based upon the dismissal of tenured public school teachers for incompetence in the absence of state codified standards. It is because the term “incompetence” is so elusive that many administrators are reluctant to terminate teachers on that basis (Whitaker, 2002). In addition, incompetence is rarely based on isolated incidences; generally, a number of factors or patterns rise (or descend) to the legal level (McCarthy et al., 2004). Therefore, to build a case of incompetence requires much *time* and *documentation*, and in some jurisdictions, lengthy remediation (Whitaker, 2002).

Modern history suggests the primary purposes for establishing tenure for public school teachers were to (a) eliminate political abuse from the teaching profession; (b) eliminate arbitrary and capricious actions by school boards; (c) create a stable and *competent* teaching force; and (d) safeguard competent professionals through job security (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; LaMorte, 1995; Rebore, 1996; Valente, 1998; Yudof et al., 1982). Protecting and enhancing competence was at the core of establishing tenure for public school teachers. Regrettably, despite the intent of tenure protections, tenure laws are “blind,” thus protecting *all* teachers who attain the sta-

tus, without regard to professional competence; hence the “iron curtain” perception of tenure held by school administrators as a mechanism that precludes the dismissal of all teachers—especially those who are incompetent.

Tenure status provides teachers with procedural due process rights—a vested property interest in the position. Procedural due process requirements place the burden of proof for dismissal on the school board (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; Bridges, 1990; LaMorte, 1995; McCarthy et al., 2004; McGrath, 1993, 1995; Rebore, 1996; Valente, 1998; Ward, 1995; Yudof et al., 1982). In addition, they also create a higher threshold for dismissal that is much more difficult (but not impossible) to sustain (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; Bridges, 1985, 1992, 1990; Frase & Streshly, 2000; LaMorte, 1995; Larson, 1983; McCarthy et al., 2004; McGrath, 1993, 1995; Rebore, 1996; Sullivan & Zirkel, 1998; Tucker, 1997; Valente, 1998; Ward, 1995; Whitaker, 2002; Yudof et al., 1982). According to Whitaker (2002), most school administrators avoid at almost any cost dismissing a tenured teaching professional on the basis of incompetence. “[i]f you can show insubordination, this may be preferable to attempt to prove incompetence. Insubordination is more measurable and finite” (p.138).

Typically, it takes a great deal of evidence to demonstrate teaching practices and behaviors that clearly demonstrate teaching incompetence and withstand the rigors of court scrutiny, as the courts generally set the standard for evidence to be a preponderance or majority (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; McCarthy et al., 2004). Further, many states’ due process requirements call for significant attempts at remediation before a teacher can be dismissed on the basis of incompetence (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; McCarthy et al., 2004; Whitaker, 2002).

Due Process Rights

The tenets of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments provide two layers of safeguards, precluding both federal and state governments from depriving the citizenry of fundamental rights through governmental action. As public schools are state entities, school boards are required to ensure and safeguard those rights that are guaranteed by law to individuals who have received such privileges by virtue of tenure laws within the jurisdiction.

Two fundamental forms of due process are considered by the courts: substantive and procedural (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Fischer et al., 2003; LaMorte, 1995, McCarthy et al., 2004). Substantive due process questions involve the development of laws and policies that have a potential for a “chilling effect” on individual freedoms and liberty, as it provides the government with a mechanism to deprive, restrict or interfere with and individual’s interests in life, liberty or property.

Conversely, procedural due process questions entail guarantees that individuals will be treated fairly and have the opportunity to oppose and challenge actions that seek to deprive constitutionally protected rights. Procedural due process provides individuals with a *modus operandi* that places the burden of fairness and the notion of equity on the government arm seeking to deprive one of life, liberty or property. Most tenured teacher dismissal challenges are based on procedural rather than substantive due process matters. The core function of due process of law is to provide a systematic check and balance process that balances the government’s need to interfere with life, liberty and property interests versus the individual’s need for freedom from such interferences.

Substantive Due Process Defined

Simply stated, substantive due process refers to the legitimacy of law. This constitutional safeguard requires that “all legislation be in furtherance of a legitimate governmental objective” (Gifis, 1984, p. 145) (emphasis added) or “based on a valid objective with means reasonably related to attaining the objective” (McCarthy & Cambron-McCabe, 2004, p. 14). Typically, judicial review on the basis of substantive due process is limited to deciding whether a law (or policy) is “rationally related to a *legitimate* government purpose.” Only in circumstances where the law has a discriminatory effect upon *suspect* or *quasi-suspect* categories of individuals (e.g., race, religion, gender, ethnicity) does the court employ a higher standard for review; hence, a standard higher than a “rational relationship to a legitimate government purpose” must be established to pass court scrutiny. Table 1 illustrates the three levels of scrutiny employed by the federal courts and the rationale for the level of review in matters of substantive due process challenges to federal or state laws, regulations and policies.

Table 1. Judicial Scrutiny for Substantive Due Process Matters.

Level of Scrutiny	Classification		
	Non-Suspect	Quasi-Suspect	Suspect
Rational	The Fourteenth Amendment does not take from the state the power to classify in the adoption of laws, unless the law is arbitrary and capricious. Federal Courts will presume validity of state statutes if it is “rationally related” to a government goal.		
Example:	Laws that require all school personnel to submit to a criminal history and background check fall under this category. The government can “rationally relate” clear criminal histories of personnel to maintaining a safe environment for students.		
Reasonable	For review of legislation regarding gender or age. More scrutiny than “rational basis” and less than that for suspect classification. Law must be “reasonably related to a legitimate government purpose.”		
Example:	Laws that require mandatory retirement for individuals at a specific age must have a reasonable nexus to a legitimate government purpose (e.g., health, safety or welfare of the citizenry).		
Compelling	Affects fundamental rights. For review of legislation that singles out special treatment for class of persons based upon alienage, nationality, religion, and race. The law must be the “least intrusive means necessary to achieve a compelling state interest.”		
Example:	Affirmative action laws would fall under this category as a means to prevent discrimination based on race, religion, nationality.		

In general, laws, regulations and policies that touch and concern the operation of public education and seek to interfere with or affect an individual’s life, liberty and property interests fall within the non-suspect classification and require simply a “rational basis” for promulgation. Given that classification and the low-level burden to sustain such interference, the government typically prevails in matters of substantive due process questions.

Procedural Due Process Defined

Procedural due process seeks to guarantee “procedural fairness where the government would deprive one of

his property or liberty” (Gifis, 1984, p. 146). Procedural due process requires that an individual is given notice and a hearing prior to being deprived of his/her property or liberty interest (Alexander & Alexander, 1995; LaMorte, 1995; Lewis, 1998; Valente, 1998). This is especially true in cases where a tenured public school teacher is recommended for dismissal, since by virtue of attaining tenure status, the teacher has a property interest in his/her job that the school district (government) seeks to extinguish. Generally, it is issues of procedural due process that the courts are called upon to review and resolve in instances for teacher dismissal based upon incompetence, rather than substantive due process challenges.

Requirements of Procedural Due Process

“Courts have noted that no fixed set of procedures apply under all circumstances” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 402), as each state’s due process requirements vary. However, the notion of procedural due process is a balancing of the individual and government interests that are affected in each circumstance.

As a minimal requirement, the Fourteenth Amendment creates an obligatory duty by the state to establish rules and standards in the instance of tenured teacher dismissal (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Alexander & Alexander, 1995; Imber & van Geel, 1995; LaMorte, 1995; McCarthy et al., 2004; Valente, 1998). As such, most jurisdictions’ due process safeguards include the following elements: (a) Notice of the charges, (b) opportunity to be heard, (c) adequate time to prepare a defense to the charges, (d) unfettered access to evidence and names of witnesses, (e) fair hearing before an impartial tribunal, (g) representation by legal counsel, (h) opportunity to present rebuttal evidence and witnesses, (i) opportunity to cross-examine unfavorable witnesses, (j) fair decision based upon evidence and findings, (k) full and complete transcript of the hearing, and (l) opportunity to appeal an unfavorable decision. In short, due process is the bedrock of fair play and equity in matters of tenured teacher dismissal.

TENURED TEACHER DISMISSAL FOR INCOMPETENCE AND THE LAW: 1983–2003

For the period 1983–2003, more than 400 tenured teacher dismissal lawsuits were litigated in state courts of appeals and federal district and appeals courts. Of the 400 cases, 106 federal and state cases in 38 states were predicated on grounds of teacher incompetence.

When reviewed as a complete body of law, the case dispositions revealed several striking results. First, the downward trend identified in the number of cases over time is of particular interest. Table 2 provides an overview of the percentage of cases litigated at the federal and state appellate level by decade.

As illustrated in Table 2, a significant number of cases were litigated between the time period of 1983–1989. During that seven-year period, the average number of cases was slightly more than six per year. For the period of 1990–1995, the average number of cases fell to about 5.5 per year. Finally, for the four-year time period 2000–2003, the average number of cases per year declined even further to 1.75 cases per year. Therefore, since the beginning of the 1990s, appellate cases based on tenured teacher dismissal for incompetence have steadily declined. An obvious question in this regard would be, given the emphasis on educational reform, particularly in the areas of teacher accountability and quality of instruction, why the number of cases in the federal and state courts has declined. Given the litigious nature of our society, it would be reasonable to expect that if reform efforts aimed at teacher accountability and quality of instruction have been effective, more teachers would be dismissed for incompetence. Subsequently, it would also be a logical assumption that more dismissals would be challenged and subject to judicial review. However, the inverse appears to be true, as evidenced by the downward trend of appellate litigation over the 21-year period reviewed.

Table 2. Federal and State Cases Litigated by Decade.

Time Period	1983–1989 (7 years)	1990–1999 (10 years)	2000–2003 (4 years)
Number of Cases	44	55	7

Table 3. Judicial Decisions Prevailing Party.

Category of Incompetence	Prevailing Party				Totals
	District		Teacher		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Total	70	66%	36	34%	100%

Note: Freq. =Frequency of prevailing party % =Percentage of prevailing party

Another interesting result pertains to the prevailing party of the litigation. Collectively, 70 cases (66%) were settled in favor of school districts compared to 36 cases (34%) that were settled in favor of teachers (see Table 3).

The results tend to support the literature, which suggests that courts are generally reluctant to substitute their judgment for that of a school district where the teacher was afforded due process and the evidence provides more than a *scintilla* of evidence. The same analysis of the cases was completed by sorting the states by union status. That review demonstrated the exact same results—in both union and non-union states, school districts prevailed in 66% of all cases litigated while teachers prevailed in 34% of the cases litigated.

Conversely, when the cases were sorted by either state or federal court, the results were quite different. Teachers prevailed in cases approximately 70% in *federal* courts, while school districts prevailed by 66% in state courts. The trend suggests that teachers are more likely to prevail on constitutional grounds, such as due process or freedom of speech, than on evidentiary or due process grounds in the state courts. The overall 2:1 ratio in favor of school districts prevailing in the courts, whether in a union or non-union state, sends a strong message to school administrators: Tenure does *not* prevent the termination of incompetent teachers!

CONCLUSIONS

Empirical evidence supports the assertion that good teachers have a significant impact on student learning (Cawelti, 1999; Johnston, 1999; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Schalock & Schalock, 1993; Stronge & Tucker, 2000; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Student learning is the outcome for measuring successful teaching (Cawelti, 1999; Johnston, 1999; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Schalock & Schalock, 1993; Stronge & Tucker, 2000; Wright, et al., 1997). Sanders and Horn (1998) found that “students assigned to ineffective teachers continue to show the effects of such teachers even when these students are assigned to very effective teachers in subsequent years” (p. 253–254). Simply stated, teacher incompetence has profound, prolonged, and staggering effects on student achievement.

A common misconception is that tenure precludes school districts from effectively dealing with teacher incompetence by protecting teachers through due process requirements. The literature suggests that some administrators believe due process safeguards shield *all* tenured teachers from dismissal or other disciplinary action. However, case law demonstrates that when all process that is due is afforded to a teacher and there is some evidence to support the actions on the part of the school district, the courts tend to uphold the decision of the school districts by a 2:1 ratio. Therefore, tenure serves as a barrier for improper dismissal because it provides teachers with due process safeguards; however, tenure does not prevent a tenured teacher from being dismissed.

Public school administrators must not be afraid to pursue dismissal of tenured teachers based on incompetence because of inaccurate perceptions that due process makes it impossible to prevail. However, it will not be easy to overcome these erroneous perceptions because most administrators lack an adequate understanding of what tenure really is. Many administrators view tenure as an insurmountable obstacle that bars dismissal of tenured teachers through due process requirements. The findings included in this study demonstrated that due process requirements do not preclude or impede a school district’s ability to dismiss on the basis of incompetence. But, because incompetence is usually not founded on one incident but rather develops over time, administrators must make the effort to document concerns and communicate with teachers. Principals are the instructional leaders in their schools, and are responsible for the continued opportunities for teacher growth and development that includes identifying deficiencies and providing opportunities to improve. It is imperative that principals do

not allow marginal or poor performing teachers to slip under the radar. Yes, it takes an extraordinary amount of time and resources to document deficiencies and to work with teachers to improve their skills. But isn't that what quality control in teaching is all about?

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Administrative Effectiveness in Making Classrooms Safe: Observations in 97 School Buildings and Their Implications for Practice

Vivian Hopp Gordon

A teacher leaves the classroom while students are having a party. Students vie to see who can stuff the most marshmallows in their mouths. A student stuffs marshmallows, begins to choke, and dies. The case was settled between the parents and the school district in a multimillion dollar settlement (*Fish v. Glenview Elementary School District No. 34*, 2005).

A special education student is dropped off at school before the supervisory time. Another, a special education student who is behaviorally disordered and has a history of violence, is also dropped off before school. The second student talks the first into going into the school, which is open, and sexually attacks the first student in the bathroom. A court found the school district liable for over \$2 million since the principal was in the building at the time and he was aware students were routinely dropped off early to school (*M.W. v. Panama Buena Vista Union School District*, 2003).

A swim teacher is looking the other way and talking to students. A student drowns. A court finds the school district liable for negligence for failure to adequately supervise (*Reid*, 2005).

Negligence in the school setting continues to be a basis of liability for schools. (Cabron-McCabe, McCarthy, & Thomas, 2004). Though historically schools like states and local governments were immune from liability (Prosser, Wade, & Schwartz, 1976) under the doctrine of governmental sovereign immunity, through increasing state statutes and court decisions schools have been held liable for negligence. In these cases, the actions of teachers and school staff often placed the school district at heightened risk for liability on the basis of *respondeat superior*, making the principal entity, or, in these cases, the school district liable for the conduct of its agents. In examining some of the most recent cases, negligent events involving classroom supervision have resulted in multimillion dollar law suits against schools, prompting concern by school leaders who seek to decrease the level of risk in their buildings and increase safety to students in their care.

A recent study of negligent risks in 97 school buildings indicates much can be done by the school administrator to increase safety and decrease levels of risk in schools. One major arena for improvement is adequate classroom supervision. Through the development and implementation of policies and practices that address classroom supervision, educational leaders can make schools both safer and more impervious to liability.

This paper seeks to present an analysis of case law related to classroom supervision, describe a study of observations in 97 school buildings made by graduate students, and discuss the results and recommendations of the implication of these data on best administrative practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Today school administrators must often grapple not only with negligence issues related to their buildings and equipment, but also address negligence which arises from lack of supervision. Adequate supervision in classrooms is critical to protect a school from legal liability (Russo, 2004).

Historically, states and local governments were immune from liability under the doctrine of governmental immunity (Prosser, Wade, & Schwartz, 1976). The historical roots of this doctrine are found in English case law and an extension of the theory that “the King can do no wrong” (*Ayala v. Philadelphia Board of Education*, 1973).

Negligence is part of a broad context of laws called torts. It is defined a wrongful act which results in injury to another’s person, property, reputation, or the like, and for which the injured party is entitled to compensation (Black, 1996). Torts can be intentional but the most common tort action is that of unintentional negligence (Permuth & Permuth, 2000). It is a legal action which compensates individuals for harm caused to them by the unreasonable conduct of others (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). The elements to a cause of action for negligence requires that an injured party prove: (a) the existence of a legal duty of care; (b) a breach of that duty; (c) a determination that the breach is the proximate cause of; and, (d) damage that results from the breach of duty (Hazard, 1971).

In schools the legal duty of care is derived from a combination of each state’s establishment of a public school system and its compulsory attendance statute. Courts have held that because states have established public school systems, often through a state statute or a state constitution, and because states have compulsory attendance statutes, states have a legal duty of care, through schools (Essex, 2002). Should schools breach this duty and the breach is the proximate cause of injury to students, they may be held liable for negligence. Some states have attempted to minimize negligence liability to schools through the passage of tort immunity statutes (Illinois Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, 1977) or through reliance upon the doctrine of sovereign immunity (Harding, 2001) with some success.

School districts can be liable for the acts of their teachers and staff. Under the historic doctrine of *respondeat superior*, employers may be liable for the negligent acts of their employees based upon principles of agency law arising out of historic master-servant laws (Reutter, 1994). Thus, in accordance with this doctrine, school districts may be held liable for negligent acts of their employees, including the acts of administrators, teachers and staff that result in injury to students.

Liability for negligence is based upon the standard of care under which individuals are required to operate. In general, the standard of care that individuals are required to take is that of a reasonably prudent person (LaMorte, 2002). To determine if an individual acted as a reasonably prudent person, courts apply various tests, sometimes in combination. Courts examine whether school personnel acted with “willful or wanton misconduct” (*Childress v. Madison County*, 1989). Some courts have determined whether or not the school “knew or should have known” of circumstances which would put students at risk of harm (*Lilienthal v. Sam Leandro Unified School District*, 1956). In other cases, courts determined whether or not the injuries under the circumstances could be considered reasonably “foreseeable” (Russo, 2004). In all these cases, if courts determined that schools knew or should have known of the negligent risks, if schools could reasonably have foreseen injury or harm to students, or if it was determined that school staff acted with willful or wanton misconduct while operating in the confines of their duties and children were injured as a result, school districts often are held liable for negligence.

Lack of classroom supervision can cause liability to school districts under certain circumstances. Generally schools districts will not be held liable for ordinary negligence within the classroom setting if teachers are adequately supervising and an unforeseeable injury results (Diamantes & Gordon, 2005). Courts have recognized that educators cannot ensure student safety from unavoidable accidents, (Russo, 2004), and schools cannot reasonably be expected to supervise and control students at all times (*Mirand v. City of New York*, 1994). Whether a teacher has breached a duty of care by failing to provide adequate supervision is usually a question of fact for a jury (*Rodrigues v. San Jose Unified School District*, 1965).

Schools often have not been found liable when teachers were supervising and still students were injured as a result of some negligence. Districts have not been found liable when teachers could not foresee the injury (Valente & Valente, 2005). For example, a school was not liable when a student pulled out a chair from another (*Boyer v. Jablonski*, 1980), or when another child slipped in a class play (*Jones v. Jackson Public Schools*, 2000). No negligence was found when a student returned to the class from recess and was struck in the eye by a pencil accidentally thrown by another student who tripped, while the teacher was standing at the door supervising (*Simonetti v. School District of Philadelphia*, 1982). A school district was not found negligent when a student went through the teacher’s desk, the student found a knife and he then used it to injure another student

(*Richard v. St. Landry Parish School Board*, 1977). A school district was not held liable when an eight year old girl was injured by another student while picking up papers from the classroom floor at the request of her teacher. (*Woodman v. Litchfield Community School District No. 12*, 1968). Facts where a kindergartener caught her fingertip in a school door-jam was held not sufficient to prove deviation from accepted standard of care and the school district was not held liable (*Benton v. The School Board of Broward County*, 1980). Schools are generally not liable when students are injured outside of the school program (Sawyer, 2000).

Schools have been found liable under other circumstances for negligence in classrooms when it was determined that lack of supervision created an environment where injury could be foreseen, where teachers acted with willful or wanton misconduct, or when teachers knew or should have known of risks of harm and failed to act reasonably. In *McLeod v. Grant* (1953), the court found the school district was liable for damages to a girl who was attacked in an unlit school room where it was determined the dangerous circumstances were foreseeable by the school district. A school settled for \$2 million with parents of a child who died stuffing marshmallows in her mouth during a class party game while the teacher was out of the classroom (*Fish v. Glenview Elementary School District No. 34*, 2005). A school was found liable when a teacher left fifty adolescent boys unsupervised for twenty-five minutes and a 14 year old student was injured in a rough "keep away" game (*Cirillo v. City of Milwaukee*, 1967). While students were learning "London Bridge" in class, a child was hurt while being rocked, and the teacher was not watching. The court found the teacher's lack of supervision constituted negligence (*Johnson v. School District of Millard*, 1998). When two special education students were dropped off early to school and one dragged the other into the school building to attack him, the court found the school district liable for failure to supervise (*M.W. v. Panama Buena Vista Union School District*, 2003). A recent court held a shooting in a closed school campus between students involved issues of adequate supervision (*Durant v. Los Angeles Unified School District*, 2003), injuries sustained by a student while performing exercises may have involved lack of supervision and could go to a jury, (*Rodriguez v. Seattle School District*, 1965), and a school district's deliberate indifference to known acts of sexual harassment was sufficiently severe and offensive to have barred a student's access to an educational opportunity (*Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, 1999). Thus, lack of classroom supervision or even indifference to harassment could make schools liable.

Classrooms with increased risk or dangerous instrumentalities may place school districts at higher risk of negligence liability, particularly where there is lack of supervision or a failure to provide appropriate protective gear. When students are engaged in more potentially dangerous activities or using more dangerous instrumentalities for class instruction or assignment, courts have found school districts liable (*Mastrangelo v. West Side Union High School District*, 1935). A court found that the school district was liable and had a duty to see that students wear protective gear while operating a welding torch (*Norman v. Ogallala Public School District*, 2000). Another court concluded that when a class is obligated to use dangerous instrumentalities, such as machinery, the teacher has a duty to exercise due care in instructing the students in the safe use of machines and in supervising their use (*Matteucci v. High School District No. 208*, 1982). When a woodworking instructor allowed a student to operate a table saw without the use of a safeguard resulting in permanent damage to the student's hand, the school district was found liable (*Barbin v. State*, 1987). A school was also found liable when it disposed of partially used flammable duplicating fluid cans and students who played on school grounds rummaged in the dumpster, becoming injured (*Brown v. Tesack*, 1990). Thus, school districts can be liable for failure to supervise students who use dangerous machinery or instrumentalities in class.

These cases demonstrate that when teachers are supervising and students are injured related to some negligence that was unforeseeable, schools often are not found liable. However, when teachers leave the classroom unsupervised for any appreciable time and children are injured, schools often are held liable for foreseeable injury. In classrooms where there are machinery or use of tools, schools must have students operate them in accordance with the instructions with which they came, even years later, so long as the machinery or tools are still being used by students. This includes implementing all safety measures, such as wearing of aprons or goggles and putting up shields or safeguards on machinery in advance of their use. When chemicals are involved, schools are advised to store them in locked cabinets inaccessible to students and discard chemicals carefully to avoid student access. Thus, classes having what could be considered dangerous activities or tools, which could be interpreted as dangerous instrumentalities, may increase the likelihood of injury and resulting liability.

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER

An educational administrator can do much to impact negligence related to classroom supervision. Statistics indicated increased physical activity in schools and injuries may go hand in hand (Murr, 2002). However in general, parents believe schools and school leaders should provide safe learning environments for youngsters (Harding, 2001). School leaders can inform and encourage teachers to supervise their classrooms. School leaders have the ability to develop and implement policies and practices that address classroom supervision. These would include building-wide policies and practices that incorporate classroom supervision when teachers to leave. The case law and existing data on increased injuries related to negligence risks, along with parent expectations related to a safe school environment, meld to create a concern for the safety of students.

THE STUDY

A study was conducted based on the hypothesis that school leaders must often grapple not only with negligence issues related to building and equipment issues, they must also address negligence that arises from lack of supervision. The participants in this study were 97 full-time graduate students who were aspiring school leaders enrolled in the educational leadership masters and doctoral programs at an urban university. All 97 participants were full-time educators employed by a public or private school.

METHODOLOGY

Prior to conducting a formal observation, the graduate students were prepared for the experience through readings, case studies, lectures, and class discussions. This enabled them to identify specific negligence risks and reflect on best practices through an administrator's lens (Biddle & Saha, 2006). Students were asked to walk through their buildings, to visit classrooms and to examine classroom supervision. Each student was asked to notate classroom supervision as adequate or having a need for improvement. The "need for improvement" was noted only when there was no teacher in the classroom. Students also were asked to write comments when they believed this was helpful to understand the situation they observed related to adequate supervision or lack of adequate supervision. Thus, the students' observations related to classroom supervision were notated in two ways: first, students observed whether classrooms they visited were adequately supervised or needed improvement; second, students made comments they believed were helpful to understand what they experienced.

The study was conducted consistent with action research methodologies (Mills, 2000). Active research and observational data are critical to understanding data driven decision making (Arhar, Holly & Kasten, 2001). In this way, one can establish priorities for educational administrative decision making (Holcomb, 2004). The ability to generalize the data is limited. The school buildings studied were chosen by graduate students and therefore reflect the urban and suburban graduate student population of the university within Illinois. The schools chosen are a mixture of elementary and high school buildings. The graduate students' subjective observations affect the data. However, while this is a limited study in 97 school buildings, the data suggest increased research and observations in this field are recommended to help better understand negligence in the school setting and to develop best practices for safety in classrooms.

RESULTS

The first set of data were check off notations related to whether classrooms were adequately supervised or classrooms needed improvement in terms of exposure to negligence supervision risk. Lack of supervision was notated only when there was no supervision. These notations can be examined in Figure 1.

Overall, the majority of school buildings had notable incidents of negligence risks involving classroom supervision. Sixty-two out of 96 school buildings, or 63.9% of school buildings were observed as having classroom supervision issues needing improvement, which, in this study meant that no one was supervising the class at the time. A little over one third, or 37 out of 97 school buildings had observably adequate classroom supervision.

The students also wrote comments describing what they observed. Table 1. represented the observations of

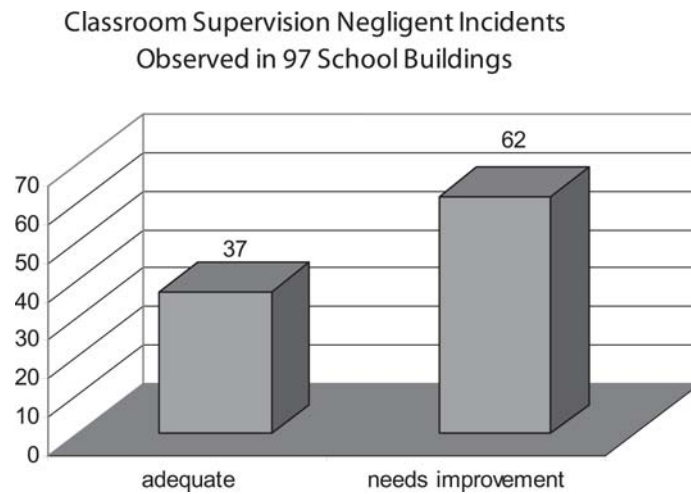


Figure 1. Classroom Supervision Negligence Incidents Observed in 97 School Buildings.

buildings having adequate supervision. Students made observations of adequate classroom supervision, commenting not only on the supervision, but also on the existence of policies established by the educational leader. Their comments were categorized as follows: (a) classes adequately supervised and efforts by teachers to provide supervision; (b) school policies established not allowing parents to approach teachers without an appointment; (c) efforts by the educational leader to encourage supervision; (d) the existence of supervisors whose job it is to check rooms for supervision; and, (e) procedures for removal of students for discipline without removing classroom supervision.

Table 1. Graduate Students' Observations of General Classroom Supervision Found Adequate in 97 School Buildings.

Classroom Supervision: Observation of Adequate Supervision in 97 Buildings –General Supervision	
Issues	Observations
Classes Supervised	All classrooms adequately supervised; students supervised all times; a teacher supervised classrooms—there was an aide shared by two classrooms; teachers generally do very good job of maintaining supervision; students are not to be left alone in classrooms before, during or after class-there is adult supervision all times; all classrooms adequately supervised; students are supervised; classrooms are well supervised; there are rare occasions when a teacher is not in the classroom or giving full attention to students; nearly all instances adults were in the room supervising.
No Unscheduled Parents	Unacceptable-the principal doesn't allow parents to speak with teachers during their classes—they have to make appointment and parents receive special colored card for the day which changes so nobody can come with the same card twice and a security guard watches room while the teacher out.
School Leader Involvement	Principal speaks to teachers when lack of supervision occurs and stresses importance of students being supervised at all times.
Supervisors	Teachers are in their classrooms-however, occasionally teachers report to their classrooms a few minutes after students return from lunch/recess, fortunately lunch/recess supervisors are assigned to check each classroom and stay with the students until teacher is present.
Procedure for Discipline	If a child must be removed from a classroom the student is sent to the Administrative Assistant's office with proper paperwork.

Table 2. Graduate Students' Observations of General Classroom Supervision Needing Improvement in 97 School Buildings.

Classroom Supervision-97 Buildings Need for Improvement General Supervision	
Issues	Observations
No Supervision	Teachers not in classrooms or doors; 7 out of 26 classrooms unsupervised; teachers on several floors routinely leave rooms unattended to walk to another classroom; it surprised me that students were left unsupervised in many arenas while school employees were unaware of students' misbehavior- often during the tort walk I was left to intervene in situations to prevent student injury and enforce school rules; teachers accustomed to leaving students alone in classrooms, average 3/4 of the teachers leave students alone; kindergarten teacher left class for 2 1/2 minutes—she wasn't even in room when I arrived; need for adequate supervision not only limited to classroom but also includes washroom and lunch lines; teachers often leave classrooms unsupervised, especially on 3rd floor(grades 3–5), when before school activities (foreign language, music-chorus) ends; teachers not supervising 100% of time; students are loosely supervised throughout school.
Teacher in Hallways	Teachers in hallways-not supervising; teachers in hallways but students in classrooms by themselves; teachers seen speaking with students in hallway while rest of students unsupervised; many teachers in hallway talking among themselves; right when I left my room I saw two teachers out of their classrooms at 9:50 A.M. talking in hall while their classrooms unattended.
Classroom Fights	Large population of students with behavioral and emotional problems-bullying, extortion of money from students, high prevalence of name calling and belittling mostly due to low self-esteem of most students-teachers do not supervise, reprimand or stop name calling or physical assaults; faculty restrains students because they have severe and profound emotional and behavioral disorders—restraint is not always performed correctly; teachers leave classes unattended—fights have erupted.
Fire in Class	Fruity candle burning in classroom-two boys started running and fighting, and ran into the bookcase with the candle on top, it fell on one of the boys—it tipped over and the hot wax from the candle fell on the neck and shoulder of one of the boys—called for nurse.
Class Waiting	Bell had already rung and the students were still in the lunchroom waiting to be picked up by teacher; students often get to classroom before teachers get there.
No Substitute	Teachers are always late to school; the one day I went into a classroom at the beginning of the day and the class was not supervised-regular teacher was absent and substitute was not present-this room does not have a lockable door so students entered the room on their own and were unsupervised; substitutes are not available for teachers who are absent.
Gross Teacher/Student Ratio	Lacking somewhat-when teachers are absent and no substitutes are available, students are supposed to go to the auditorium where chaos reigns; policies needed for teacher absences-the use of the auditorium for absentee study hall with security guard/substitute to student ratio is 2:100; students sit unsupervised in auditorium.
Discipline	Despite principals request students are put outside of their classroom without supervision.
Transitions	Students are sent to classrooms-often the teachers are outside collecting the rest of students; overall there was need for increased school supervision during transition periods of the day among upper grade level students but fair at the lower level while most classrooms supervision practices are considered acceptable there are problems-one glaring potential problem is supervision of students during passing periods-teachers are required to be in hall and not in classrooms.

Table 3. Graduate Students' Observations of Adequate Classroom Supervision Incidents Related to Teacher Errands in 97 School Buildings.

Teacher Errands-Adequate Supervision	
Issues	Observations
Procedures	Procedures in place and known by staff when need to leave; procedures in place and known by all staff when the need to leave the classroom arises-students are supervised at all times.

The second set of data related to observational comments describing classroom supervision needing improvement. As defined by the study, the “need for improvement” comments meant no supervision was found in classrooms. (See Table 2).

The data indicated a need for improvement related to general supervision of classrooms in the following categories: (a) large numbers of classes in school buildings without any supervision at any given time; (b) teachers in hallways talking, leaving classes unsupervised; (c) lack of supervision in classrooms where fights, name-calling, bullying and physical assaults take place; (d) a lit candle in a class; (e) classes unsupervised waiting to be picked up between classes; (f) teachers absent with no substitute present; (g) large numbers of students sent to auditoriums having significantly little or no supervision; (h) students disciplined by being put outside classrooms, unsupervised; and, (i) lack of student supervision in classrooms during passing periods. The sheer

Table 4. Graduate Students' Observations of Inadequate Classroom Supervision Incidents Related to Teacher Errands in 97 School Buildings.

Teacher Errands-Need for Improvement	
Issues	Observations
No Procedures	Teachers leave room to go to office, washroom, or Xerox during passing period between classes, many rooms unsupervised ;teacher goes to look for missing student; need policy in place for extenuating circumstances—some teacher schedules programmed for 3 classes consecutively; some teachers leave class to have lunch and not enough sub-coverage for absentee study; there is no system for relieving teachers who have an emergency or need to go to washroom; teachers are also often seen leaving the classroom to visit the washroom and teacher's lounge during class time which leaves students unsupervised for periods of time; I saw one teacher walking down the hall to the restroom leaving her class unsupervised. need for policy on what to do to alleviate stress a teacher may feel when being pulled away from his/her classroom; teacher often leave class unattended—we do not have a policy in our handbook regarding procedures in case of an emergency to get additional support for supervision.
Teacher>Teacher	There are times in a classroom teacher's day when she/he must step out into the hallway to speak with a student, another teacher , or an administrator and not possible to supervise the students in the classroom.
Get Supplies	There are times that a teacher on my floor will run into my class to borrow the T.V. or radio leaving 22 other students unsupervised.
Take Sick Child	Teachers arriving to class late or leaving their students to use the washroom or run an errand; students waiting in hall for teacher to unlock door when she is late for class.
Teacher Late	Bell had already rung and the students were still in the lunchroom waiting to be picked up by teacher; students often get to classroom before teachers get there.
No Means of Communication	There are a handful of rooms that don't have emergency call buttons or phones to get immediate support-combination of no communication and no policy for emergency support.

number of comments and notated observations describe a need on the part of educational leaders to address the issue of classroom supervision.

The observational comments about supervision issues related to “teacher errands” were extracted from the total observation responses and separately were examined in Table 3.

There were only two positive comments related to teacher errands and classroom supervision. These described two schools in which procedures were in place and known to teachers about leaving the classroom to do errands and providing supervision. See Table 4.

The number of comments related to lack of supervision due to teacher errands was substantially larger than the number of positive comments. The comments related to lack of supervision due to teacher errand issues include: (a) teachers leaving rooms unsupervised due to lack of policies about supervision when the teacher must leave for an errand; (b) lack of supervision when a teacher must step out to speak to another teacher; (c) lack of policies related to teachers leaving classrooms unsupervised to get supplies or equipment; (d) lack of supervision while a teacher takes a sick child for help; (e) teachers arriving late while class is unsupervised; and, (f) teachers having no means of communication if they have to leave class or need help.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest there is evidence of negligent supervision in school classrooms. The majority of school buildings observed, or 63.9%, were observed as having some level of negligent risk, while a little more than a third of the school buildings observed, or 38.14%, were found to be adequate in terms of classroom supervision. Thus, just in terms of incidents, school buildings were more likely than not to have classrooms that were unsupervised.

The observational comments by graduate students describing adequate classroom supervision are also revealing in terms of their implications for educational leadership. The data indicated schools having adequate supervision have educational leaders who make policies and practices related to encouraging classroom supervision, who create the means for teachers to leave classrooms supervised while going on errands, who make policies and procedures for removal of students without decreasing supervision, and who make these procedures known to staff when the need to leave the classroom arises.

The observational comments by graduate students describing lack of supervision also have implications for educational leadership. The implication were that educational leaders should: (a) not only make policies and practices encouraging and requiring classroom supervision, but enforce them; (b) create policies and practices on how teachers should do both hallway supervision and supervise their classes; (c) develop policies directly addressing how teachers should manage fights, name-calling, bullying and physical assaults in their classroom related to supervision; (d) not allow fire in classrooms; (e) develop policies to ensure teachers pick up their classes in a timely manner; (f) be prepared with substitutes in classes when school begins; (g) assure that students sent to large arenas in the school building have adequate supervision; (h) develop procedures for providing adequate supervision in hallways during passing periods; and (i) identify supervised places for disciplined students to be placed rather than unsupervised outside the classroom door.

In addition there are other considerations that the educational leader should find it expedient to implement. Teacher evaluations could include a component related to adequate classroom supervision. This also would include annual training and in-service programs to be presented to teachers and staff detailing the administrator’s expectations for classroom supervision. Providing teachers with current and up to date school law information about recent negligence cases can assist in their understanding of how courts interpreting circumstances related to classroom supervision.

CONCLUSIONS AND BEST PRACTICE

In summation, a review of case law in the area of classroom negligence related to supervision revealed that schools can be held liable under certain circumstances for student injuries resulting from negligence in the school setting. A study conducted in 97 school buildings indicated that negligence incidents existed to varying degrees related to classroom supervision in a majority of schools. As a result of existing case law and the implications of this exploratory study, it is recommended that school administrators take a variety of steps to mitigate

negligence liability related to classroom supervision. Best practice would include having educational leaders: (a) provide adequate instruction to teachers and staff on existing school policies related to classroom supervision; (b) have and implement policies related to classroom supervision if a teacher is late or absent; (c) have and implement a policy related to classroom supervision when a teacher needs to leave the classroom for a short time; (d) have and implement a policy for classroom supervision when some students are in the classroom and others need to be picked up elsewhere; (e) have and implement a policy related to classroom supervision of students during transition periods; and (f) develop a supervised alternative placement in the building for students sent out for disciplinary reasons. School leaders can further evaluate teachers on classroom supervision, provide in-service training on avoiding negligence risks related to supervision and introduce teachers to current school law information about recent negligence cases.

School leaders can be active in mitigating risks of negligence lawsuits related to classroom supervision while making the school environment safe for the students in their care. While negligence risks may exist, the case law and research guides our understanding that sound administrative practice can impact reduction of risk and injury to students. In doing so, school leaders advance the safety of their classrooms and provide direction for teachers and staff that ultimately effect the safe environment in schools. When school leaders make classrooms safe, they also meet the expectations of parents who often assume when they drop off their children to school that their children will be safe.

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Understanding Leadership Behaviors of Principals

Shirley A. Johnson and Steve Busch

The question about how the school principal most effectively impacts student outcomes usually starts with an examination of effective schools research. According to effective schools research, the principal impacts the school by exhibiting high expectations of teacher performance and student achievement, supervising teachers, coordinating the curriculum, emphasizing basic skills, and monitoring student progress (Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979). These research studies generally focused on the manner in which the principal directly affected student outcomes in the school. Even though the recommendations from the effective schools research are highly valued by educational leadership practitioners, the notion of how to fully implement them to effect student achievement has remained vague and imprecise and has failed to provide educational leaders with practical guidelines for becoming more effective in their positions (Waters, Marzanno, & McNulty, 2003).

Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) redefined the concept of educational leadership in the following manner: “An educational leader is someone whose actions (both in relation to administrative and educational tasks) are intentionally geared to influencing the school’s primary processes and, therefore, ultimately students’ achievement levels” (p. 403). In a further attempt to operationalize the effect of principals’ actions, Hallinger (1989; 1994) developed an instrument that measured principal’s instructional management effectiveness. The Principal’s Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) identified leadership functions which were in turn translated into behaviors. These behaviors referred to the principal’s mental and physical actions, which influenced the members of their schools to perform tasks in a manner that supported the goals of student achievement. Bossert, et al. (1982) proposed a different way of examining the effect of principal leadership. They suggested that principals’ usual behaviors create links between the characteristics of the school’s organizational and learning climate. These links to school climate are the mechanisms through which principals truly impact student learning and are referred to as “indirect effects.”

BEHAVIORS EFFECTING LEADERSHIP

In order for an educational leader to effectively impact the climate of the school in ways that promote student achievement, he/she must first develop an awareness of his/her leadership behavior patterns and the manner in which they impact the members of the school organization. Regarding individual behavioral patterns, no amount of discussion about these behaviors will benefit the aspiring or practicing principal because these behaviors are the result of underlying needs and perceptions of which the person may not be aware (Birkman, 1995). Principals need the opportunity to develop this awareness and identify how these will impact their practice as well as the culture of school.

These personal behavior patterns are first demonstrated through our usual behavior which is influenced by what is believed to be socially acceptable. Actions people take to be perceived as socially acceptable have been used to such an extent that it is sometimes hard to know individuals’ true identities. Until individuals have done

the work of separating their socialized behavior from their genuine personality, then others will relate to them just as they are perceived by others. Consequently, the more socialized behavior an individual tends to reflect, the more difficult it is for others to know the real person (Birkman, 1995).

People often are uncomfortable with discovering the true self. So much time is spent working from behind personal socialized behavior that individuals are very reluctant to consider the truth about ourselves when that truth is neither positive nor negative, it is just who each individual is. This behavior often misleads faculty and staff and causes relationships that may not produce the interactions sought by the principal. Consequently, it is important to determine areas of personal strengths and areas of concern. Equally important is an understanding that areas of weakness are not indicators of “bad” behaviors or tendencies. In fact, Birkman (1995) stated that understanding one’s own behaviors is critical to maximizing workplace effectiveness:

A person’s “weaknesses” are never a negative indication. Weaknesses simply point us to our strengths. And the sooner we discover which aspects of any job we are best suited for, the sooner we can begin to figure out why we feel the way we do about ourselves, our jobs, and other people. (p. 17)

This process allows principals to effectively build teams from strengths and diversity rather than solely from similarities. According to Lewin and Regine (2000), relationships are not established by superficially knowing one another, but rather they are genuine relationships based on authenticity and care. To have deep regard for people inside and outside of the school, the principal must first make an effort to become self-aware and authentic. Authentic leaders, according to Evans (1996), are those who are actually followed; in fact, these leaders are:

distinguished not by their techniques or styles but by their integrity and savvy. Integrity is a fundamental consistency between personal beliefs, organizational aims, and working behavior. . . . Savvy is practical competence, a hard-to-quantify cluster of qualities that includes craft knowledge, life experience, native intelligence, common sense, intuition, courage, and capacity to handle things. (p. 184)

“In their practice, principals often respond to the constant stream of emerging problems or promising opportunities unaware of the personal behavioral patterns that satiate situations, or unintentionally exhibit behaviors that influence already sensitive situations or create unnecessary concern for faculty and staff that contribute to suspicion and mistrust” (Kouzes & Pozner, 1993, p. 90). In most instances, these decisions or actions are done without awareness of the behavior patterns underlying the decisions and the principals often wonder why the resulting outcomes of their decisions were not as they expected.

Combs, et al. (1999) explained the impact of behaviors on leadership through the person-centered view in the following statement.

The person-centered view of people contends that we do not respond directly to the forces exerted on us. Instead, we behave in terms of the meanings of perceptions that exist for us at the moment we act. More specifically, people behave according to how they see themselves, the situations they confront, and the purposes they seek to fulfill. (p. 10)

Leaders act on their beliefs, especially beliefs about themselves, the faculty, staff and administrators with whom they work, and the mission that they seek to reach. The manner in which teachers perceive and interpret the actions of the school principal leads to the development of the culture of the school and the principal’s overall approach to leadership is related to the successful implementation of innovation by teachers. Offering educational leaders effective ways of managing their behavior and enhancing the behavior of those whom they will lead allows them the opportunity to effectively maintain a school culture that is hospitable to learning.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to gather information from three elementary schools regarding the leadership behaviors of the respective building principals. Specifically, the study examined the level of agreement between principals’ leadership behaviors as identified by the Leadership Profile and the faculties’ perceptions of these principals’ leadership behaviors. The objectives of this study are: a) to examine the level of agreement between principals’ leadership behaviors as identified by the Leadership Profile with the results of principals’ interviews, and b) to examine the level of agreement between principals’ leadership behaviors, as identified by the

Leadership Profile, with the faculty's' perceptions of the principals' leadership, behavior as measured by the results of the teacher/staff focus groups.

This inquiry employed qualitative methodologies in order to gather information from three elementary schools regarding the leadership behaviors of the respective building principals. Specifically, the study examined the level of agreement between principals' leadership behaviors identified by the Leadership Profile and the faculty perceptions of these principals. Using techniques of ethnographic case study, a variety of perspectives were gathered in order to allow for analysis and synthesis of data in an expansive array of contexts. This type of purposive sample case study involves an intense holistic analysis of a particular sample within a purely naturalistic context. The analysis and synthesis of data in this study was focused on identifying how well each principal's leadership behaviors aligned with the respective faculty's perceptions of that principal.

Sample

The first step in collecting these data involved the identification of three principals within a school district who had achieved academic success with a student population of 89% or higher low socioeconomic status. Namely, the principals had entered a campus in need of reform and had successfully achieved the reform necessary for students to improve and be successful. For the purpose of this paper, the schools and their principal are known as A, B, and C respectively. These three principals were purposefully selected based on the change in their campus' academic achievement and their ability to effect this change in a short period of time. The principal of school A began her second year of principalship during the study; the principal of school B began her third year of principalship during the study; and, principal C, an experienced principal of 10 years, began her sixth year at this elementary school during the study. All three of these campuses were located within an urban school district in the greater Houston area. The student populations on these campuses were extremely low socio-economic and 90% or higher minority population, with a strong majority of students identified as being at-risk.

Instrumentation

Each principal in this study was given The Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a). The Leadership Profile is adapted from the Birkman method, a well-established instrument frequently used to measure leadership behaviors in the business world. Within the Profile, leaders answer a variety of questions that yield scores on eleven distinct components, including esteem, acceptance, structure, authority, freedom, change, empathy, thought, activity, advantage, and challenge. Each of these components identifies how the principal behaves in specific situations; these situations describe how the principal usually behaves (socially adaptable behavior), what the principal *needs* from other people in order to function at his or her best, and how the principal behaves when his or her needs are not met (*stress*).

The Leadership Profile

The results of the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a) are dependent upon the principal's answers to several sets of questions that ask for perceptions of others and perceptions of self. The results of both sets of perceptions provide indications of principals' unique actions and reactions to the world around us. More importantly, these perceptions become the basis for how and why we behave. The Leadership Profile measures these two different perspectives of the principal's behaviors and offers a more incisive and complete assessment of behavior with its natural strengths and limitations. Additionally, the instrument includes a section that asks for responses regarding particular vocational areas. The results of this portion of the questionnaire measure interests, not skill level, and are used to help principals understand the impact of interests as they relate to job functioning.

The Birkman Method was selected as the core of The Leadership Profile because of its more than 50 years of statistical stability and its 40 plus years of use in the business community (Birkman, 2001). The Birkman Method provides a self-reporting questionnaire that elicits responses about perception of self, perception of social context, and perception of occupational opportunities. The results of the questionnaire generate results applicable for leaders in education and in business. The library from which feedback is drawn for the Profile reports was fully rewritten to match leader behaviors in an educational setting (Johnson, 2003a).

Behavioral Clusters of the Leadership Profile

While reviewing the components separately, the principal is provided a wealth of information that can become overwhelming without providing the principal with feedback regarding the impact of their behavior. Clustering the components as to leadership impact, the components paint vivid descriptions of the principal's behavioral tendencies in reference to leadership concepts and assist him/her in clearly understanding their behavioral patterns. The clusters are as follows: (a) relationship building; (b) organizational control; (c) decision-making; (d) innovation; (e) goal achievement, and (f) leadership influences (Johnson, 2003b).

Three Relational Levels of Behavior

The components provide considerable information toward building self-awareness; however, within each component principals are provided additional information through three relational levels: usual, needs, and stress. These relational scores measure how the individual is perceived by others (usual), how others are likely to affect the individual (needs), and how the individual reacts when needs are not met (stress). As Birkman (2002) found, "Components information enables individuals to see clearly the significant and influential qualities associated with usual and needs scores. These insights assist [principals] in avoiding the pitfalls of the third aspect, stress" (p. 20). The relational scores address the ways individuals interact in relationships, how they excel with their particular strengths, and why they become frustrated and ineffective under certain conditions.

Data Collection

This study took place in the spring of 2005 after consent was obtained from the university internal review board as well as the school district and campus principals involved in the study. Data collection involved extensive interviews with the three principals, their administrative teams, and the teachers on those campuses. These multi-level interviews with various members of each campus increased the richness of the data and allowed for triangulation of the qualitative data by offering multiple perspectives regarding the principals' leadership behaviors. Thirty minute interviews were conducted throughout an entire school day on each campus. All interviews were tape recorded in order to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions for future analysis. Each researcher also took extensive field notes to record non-verbal cues such as the body language of the participants as they were interviewed.

When possible, all teachers on a campus were interviewed as teams and occasionally in pairs. In some instances, a few teachers were unavailable for interview, but a majority of teachers, including a representative sample across grade levels and subject areas, were included. The participants were allowed to answer the questions and elaborate in whatever way they wanted, which increased the authenticity and hopefully the accuracy of the responses.

Reliability and Validity

To increase the depth of understanding regarding each campus culture, all interviews were conducted in the naturalistic setting of the school building. Responses were based on low inference indicators as identified by the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a), which minimized external threats to validity. The potential for research bias was minimized through reflexivity, in which the researchers engaged in "critical self-reflection about potential biases and predispositions" (Milinki, 1999, p. 160). Triangulation of the data was achieved in several ways. First, qualitative data were used to support the findings of the Leadership Profile results for each principal. Additionally, each of the three researchers coded and recoded the data sets in order to help strengthen the validity of the themes that emerged.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts entered into Qualrus (author, date), a qualitative data analysis software tool. Within Qualrus, the data were coded for themes that recurred within and among the

interviews, both between and among the participants from all three schools. Thus, the interview transcripts regarding each principal were coded individually and summarized across all three data sets. Common themes and critical patterns that focused on any of the eleven components of the Leadership Profile or another relevant issue were identified and then analyzed. By using these codes, the links between principal leadership behaviors and faculty perceptions of these behaviors could be effectively recognized and analyzed.

FINDINGS

The principals' behaviors, as identified from the Leadership Profile, were analyzed against the results of the principals' interviews. In addition, the results of the teacher focus groups were analyzed to determine if their perceptions of those principals' behaviors were the same behaviors as those found in the Leadership Profile and in the principals' interviews. The results of these analyses verify much of what we know about principals' leadership behaviors but have not been able to explain except through referencing the skills and traits research (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). It was clear in our findings that the three principals were often unaware of the impact of their behaviors on the performance of teachers and on the climate of the building.

Our findings further underscored the work of Argyris and Schon (1974) as they described espoused theory vs. theory in use.

When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory of action of that past situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is this theory in use. (p. 6–7)

Argyris and Schon (1974) believed that productive work and management come only when the espoused theory and the theory in use were aligned. They found educators to be unaware of the differences between what they did (theory in use) and what they said (espoused theory). It is only when educators engaged in reflection and investigated their theories in use that they became aware that what they said and thought may not have been what they did (Day, 1999). Through our work, we found that the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a) assisted teachers and principals in the investigation of discrepancies between what they say and do as well as determining the impact on the climate in the building and in the classroom. The Leadership Profile identifies interests and needs that drive the behavior regardless of the espoused beliefs. The notion here is an understanding and congruence between actions and beliefs.

Principal and Teacher Responses Matching Components of the Principals' Leadership Profiles

The responses generated from the principals' interviews and the teacher focus groups matched the results of the principals' Leadership Profile (2003a). The percentage of matched coded responses between the two groups with regard to the results of the Leadership Profile was high for each of the three participating principals (Table 1). Teachers described behaviors exhibited by the principal in the daily routines of the school that matched the components of the Leadership Profile. Principals, in describing their own behavior, provided responses that matched the components as well.

Level of Agreement between Leadership Behaviors and Principal Interviews

An analysis of the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a) results and the principal interviews revealed matching response patterns from 51% to 82%. The results of all three principal interviews matched 6 of the 11 components from their Leadership Profile during a 30–35 minute interview. Even though all three principals have very different personalities and different approaches to leadership, the results of all three interviews matched the component scores that comprise the behavioral clusters of Organizational Control (structure, authority) and Goal Achievement (advantage, challenge).

Table 1. Principal and Teacher Responses Matching Components of the Leadership Profile.

Sourced	Responses	Number Coded Components	Matched Coded Responses	Percent Matched
Principal	52	10	43	82%
Teachers – Principal A	146	9	122	84%
Principal B	38	10	32	84%
Teachers – Principal B	287	10	247	86%
Principal C	56	9	42	75%
Teachers – Principal C	155	10	123	79%

Note. Percentage in Matching Coded Responses column represents the percentage of correctly coded responses from the total responses.

Implications from the Findings

It is apparent from the results of the interviews that the component scores of the Leadership Profile match the behaviors coded in the interviews of the three principals. Interestingly, several stress behaviors also emerged in the interviews that directly matched principal C's and B's profile results. As expected, these stress behaviors were most damaging to teachers' perceptions of the climate in the building but the principal was unaware of the impact.

Even though all three principals have different years of experience and different personalities, it is important to note that the most evident behaviors among the three principals were components comprising the behavioral clusters of Goal Achievement (advantage, challenge) and Organizational Control (structure, authority). Additionally, all three principals have high challenge and low advantage scores in their Leadership Profiles. High challenge indicates a willingness to set high goals in an environment of hard work. These principals, as indicated by the socio-economic status of their schools, are willing to take on challenging goals and situations while enrolling their faculties to assist. They also tend to be very aware of their personal shortcomings and are frequently critical of their personal performance.

The low advantage component demonstrates a win-win attitude while dedicated to the growth of others in the school. These principals worked hard at creating a culture of cooperation and well intentioned relations while valuing non-material rewards for the work of both the principal and the faculty. These principals assumed that their faculty was trustworthy and quickly recognized the long term benefits of the faculties' contributions.

Obviously, these principals impact the climate in the building with hard work and very challenging goals. They would have the tendency to expect strong performance from all faculty and staff while not afraid to work right along with the faculty just as hard as they expect the faculty to work. In some cases, such principals could be driven causing "burnout" among faculty and creating a perception of insensitivity toward the work performance contributed by each faculty member.

Under stress these principals could possible set unrealistic goals which could in turn demotivate faculty and likely emphasize unrealistic pressure to meet those goals. They could be so focused on the idealistic underpinnings of a project that they minimize the importance of material rewards to support achievement and assume that everyone is motivated by intrinsic values. Having such high challenge scores, these principals will blame themselves for any failure and possibly feel inadequate and/or fear failure.

With just the scores from the goal achievement components, the impact on the climate of the school is evident. Long periods of stressful challenge and advantage behavior exhibited by a principal, and particularly a new principal, could seriously impact trust issues as well as creating a very tense climate peppered with very high goals and often unrealistic expectations. Such behavior can also produce burn-out behavior among principals and increase the already evident feelings of failure and demotivation. These data provide important information for superintendents that supervise principals. A supervising superintendent can not change the behavior, but it is very important to be aware of a person possessing high challenge behavior in order to assist the principal in learning how to balance their drive and to consider how others will react to their personal intensity.

Level of Agreement between Principals' Leadership Behaviors and Teachers' Perceptions

The analysis from the results of the faculty's perceptions was most revealing in that these data matched the results of the principals' interviews and the results of the administration of the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a). The results of the teacher focus group interviews demonstrated a 60% to 78% match rate of teacher responses to the results of the principals' Leadership Profile. The interview results demonstrated that teachers' are often aware of principals' behaviors, whether usual, need or stress behavior, and can describe them quite well. On the other hand, principals did not seem to be as aware of the impact of their need or stress behavior on the faculty.

Discussion

From the data generated in this research, we studied principals' leadership behavior from four behavioral clusters: (a) Building Relationships, (b) Organizational Control, (c) Decision-Making Processes, and (d) Goal Achievement. The intent was to discover those underlying behaviors and/or motivations that affect campus leadership and eventually develop effective intervention strategies to improve campus leadership.

Building Relationships

We anticipated a large number of responses for the components of this cluster (esteem, acceptance). For the one principal that exhibited strong esteem scores as well as high acceptance scores, a number of relationship oriented comments were recorded. It was evident in the responses that building relationships were important to her effectiveness. Even though the other principals had comments coded for this cluster, the numbers were small enough that they offered little explanation. All three principals evidenced high acceptance scores (ability to work in groups), while only one principal recorded strong esteem scores to compliment the acceptance. As a result, the faculty comments from both Principals B and C did not include comments noting purposeful relationship building efforts. For these three faculties, their comments seemed to offer a contradiction to the importance of building relationships, especially in high stress situations.

Organizational Control

Since structure and authority are crucial to the effective administration of a campus, it was no surprise that frequent comments from the faculty and the principals allowed matched responses for these two components. The greatest surprise emerged from how clearly the combination of authority and structure surfaced from the faculty responses regarding the impact of the two behavioral components together. It was clear from the faculty responses that organizational control is extremely important to their personal performance. These data provided the principals with information as to the impact of their personal behavior regarding common organizational and managerial functions in the building. In most cases, the principals were able to understand the impact of these behaviors and describe faculty reaction to such behavior.

Decision-making Processes

This cluster of behaviors was seldom mentioned by the faculty. We also learned that these behaviors are critical to leadership, but are more subtle than the more evident behaviors associated with organization and management. More care will be given to the content of the questions so as to generate the behaviors associated with this cluster of behaviors in the future.

Goal Achievement

The strongest behavioral cluster to emerge during this research was that associated with goal achievement (advantage, challenge). Not only did both emerge, they also emerged relative to the strength of the score for

each of the principals. As evident in the earlier tables, challenge was frequently coded for Principals A and B, yet fewer comments were coded for Principal C. Interestingly, advantage was coded for both B and C from the teachers' comments, but very few comments were coded for A. Yet, an examination of the principals' comments revealed many coded remarks for all three principals. As a result, it is fair to say that these three principals are goal driven principals that push themselves and the faculty hard. Additionally, they seek to create team work that functions in a win-win environment. These principals set very high goals and reach them, sometimes at a very high cost.

CONCLUSIONS

This research began in an effort to find an effective method of assisting students enrolled in a master's degree program to understand their personal leadership behavior. Knowing that one's behavior can not be changed, it is important to help beginning principals understand those areas that will be strengths and find ways to cope with the areas that will create stress. This work began with the administration of the Leadership Profile (Johnson, 2003a) to determine if the principals' perception matched the results of the Profile and if teachers' perceptions matched those same results as well. This work provided enough interest to generate funds to support the research of a larger sample that will also incorporate quantitative measures. We believe that a larger sample coupled with quantitative measures will enable a better understanding of those underlying behaviors that impact leadership.

From this study of three inner city female principals and their faculties, it is clear that the Leadership Profile (2003a) provides the important data needed to begin a more in-depth investigation of the principal's underlying motivations and behaviors that impact the climate of schools.

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Best Practice: The Role of Staff Development in the School Improvement Process

Ronald A. Lindahl

One of Achilles' (2004) persistent challenges regarding the knowledge base is "Can you provide two or more high quality, replicable, independent empirical studies (SBR) of the positive effects of PD [professional development] on teacher behavior and especially of its subsequent effects on student short and long-term success as usually measured?" (p. 10). He backed up this with a review of nine major articles and studies on professional development that supported the use of professional development but failed to provide evidence of its effects on student learning. The purpose of this article is not to challenge Achilles' conclusions; he is correct—it is an inescapable fact that there is a dearth of substantive, high quality research on the effects of staff development on student learning. However, one possible explanation for the lack of demonstrated positive results from staff development is that it is seldom properly integrated into the overall school improvement effort. This article attempts to summarize best practice in staff development for large-scale school improvement in order that school leaders may ensure that it is implemented properly before researchers attempt to judge its potential merits.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Various authors differentiate between *staff development*, *professional development*, and *in-service education*; however, following the example of Sparks and Hirsh (1997), for the purposes of this article these terms are considered interchangeable. Following the conceptual definition promulgated by the National Staff Development Council (2005b), staff development is herein broadly defined as the continuing education of teachers, administrators, and other school employees.

At first glance, research on staff development appears to present conflicting results (Guskey, 1995). Research by McLaughlin (1990), Weatherley and Lipsky (1997), and Wise (1991) supported staff development focused on the individual teacher, more specifically on the day-to-day activities of that teacher. This perspective contrasts with that of Tye and Tye (1984) and Waugh and Punch (1987), who found staff development to be more effective when focused not on the individual but on the organization as a whole. Research by Joyce, McNair, Diaz, and McKibbin (1976), Lambert (1988), and Massarella (1980) concluded that staff development and school improvements should be initiated and carried out by individual teachers and school-based personnel, whereas Barth (1991), Clune (1991), Mann (1986), and Wade (1984) reached contrasting results, supporting the need for an external vision extending beyond individual classrooms and schools. Finally, Doyle and Ponder (1976), Fullan (1985), Mann (1978), and Sparks (1983) advocated the need for gradual and incremental change, whereas Berman and McLaughlin (1978) and McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) concluded that the more effort and the greater overall change demanded of teachers, the more likely they were to be enthusiastic about the improvements and implement them well.

These apparently contradictory findings are readily reconcilable if one bears in mind the multitude of individual and organizational needs and circumstances under which staff development may be of assistance. Staff development may appropriately be directed at an individual, at groups of people within an organization, or at the

entire organization, depending on the specific context and circumstances of that school's improvement process.

Although there are some generally accepted principles associated with effective staff development (see Table 1), it is important to recognize that because individual and organizational circumstances and needs vary, no single form of staff development can guarantee positive results across all settings. Organizations whose school improvement process contemplates changes that are vastly different from existing norms need far more extensive and intensive staff development than those making a more limited incremental shift. The objectives and forms

Table 1. Basic Principles of Staff Development, with Bibliographic Sources.

Classroom Supervision: Observation of Adequate Supervision in 97 Buildings –General Supervision	
Basic Principle of Staff Development	Bibliographic Source
Centered around learning communities with goals aligned to those of the school and district	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); National Staff Development Council (2001)
Led by school and district administrators, who participate in the staff development and provide support coupled with pressure for school improvement	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Blase and Blase (2004); Guskey (1995); National Staff Development Council (2001); Sparks & Hirsh (1987)
Applicable to participants' individual school situations is understood	Berman & McLaughlin (1975); Butler (1992); Joyce & Showers (1980)
Allows substantial time and resources to support adult learning and collaboration	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Guskey (1995); National Staff Development Council (2001); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Uses disaggregated student data to determine staff development priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement	Butler (1992); National Staff Development Council (2001); Orlich (1984); Sparks (1983)
Uses multiple sources of data to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact	National Staff Development Council (2001)
Is research-based and prepares educators to apply research to decision making	National Staff Development Council (2001); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Applies knowledge about adult learning and change	Butler (1992); Glickman et al. (2001); Lieberman (1995); National Staff Development Council (2001); Sparks & Hirsh (1997)
Provides educators with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to collaborate	Guskey (1995); National Staff Development Council (2001)
Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments; and hold high expectations for their academic achievement	Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995); National Staff Development Council (2001); Sparks & Hirsh (1997)
Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Berman & McLaughlin (1975); Butler (1992); Joyce & Showers (1980); National Staff Development Council (2001); Sparks & Hirsh (1997); United States Department of Education (1996a)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued). Basic Principles of Staff Development, with Bibliographic Sources.

Classroom Supervision: Observation of Adequate Supervision in 97 Buildings –General Supervision	
Basic Principle of Staff Development	Bibliographic Source
Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately	National Staff Development Council (2001)
Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement	Guskey (1995); Sparks & Hirsh (1997); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community	United States Department of Education (1996a)
Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Butler (1992); Guskey (1995); Sergiovanni (1996/1997); Sparks & Hirsh (1997); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Blase and Blase (2004); Butler (1992); Guskey (1995); Sparks & Hirsh (1997); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Is driven by a coherent long-term plan that integrates various school improvement efforts, yet moves incrementally	Butler (1992); Fullan (1991); Guskey (1995); Sarason (1991); Senge (1990); Sparks & Hirsh (1997); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its effects on teacher instruction and student learning in order to guide subsequent staff development efforts	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Guskey (1995); Sparks & Hirsh (1997); United States Department of Education (1996a)
Led by facilitators have credibility with participants and provide follow-through beyond initial training	Butler (1992); Sparks & Hirsh (1997)
Responds to current attitudes and teachers' professional stages of development and life cycles, while helping them respond to life transition events	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Butler (1992); Glickman et al. (2001)
Enhances teachers' internal motivation	Glickman et al. (2001); Sergiovanni (1996/1997)
Is sensitive to personal needs and schedules	Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005); Blase and Blase (2004); Butler (1992)
Is founded on moral convictions grounded in cultural norms	Sergiovanni (1996/1997)
Provides for decisions that reflect constructivist teaching and learning principles	Clinchy (1995); Sergiovanni (1996/1997); Sparks & Hirsh (1997)
Focuses on organizational improvement rather than on staff personal improvement	Butler (1992); Gall & Renshler (1985)

of staff development needed in the early (planning) phase of the school improvement process vary significantly from those appropriate to the implementation or institutionalization phases. As is addressed in the next section of this article, at any given point in the life of an organization, individuals differ in their stages of concern for specific improvements (Hall & Hord, 2001). Also, certain individuals may have innate propensities to be early adopters of an innovation, whereas others tend to be more resistant to change (Rogers, 1995). Staff development efforts must recognize and accommodate these individual differences.

In summary, staff development must have a clear focus, highly related to the specific organizational improvements being implemented. It should not be oriented to the development of the individual, *per se*, but rather to the development of the individual as a component of the school's attempts to improve student learning. It is a highly idiosyncratic process, varying in accordance with the situation, organization, and individual. Authorities generally agree that it should be guided by organizational and individual performance data and research and refined through ongoing evaluation. It must be job-embedded and designed according to appropriate andragogical principles.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Staff development can serve a variety of functions, depending on the specific needs of the individual, group, or organization. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995, p. 597) proposed two major goals of staff development: *learning* new skills and perspectives on content, pedagogy, and learners and *unlearning* contradictory, old ones. Hixon and Tinzman (1990) added to these purposes: (a) expanding the knowledge base, (b) learning from practice, (c) developing new attitudes and beliefs, (d) providing opportunities for self-renewal, and (e) collaborating with, and contributing to, the growth of others. Fullan, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett (1990) proposed that staff development could serve to enhance a teacher's or administrator's (a) technical repertoire (skills and practices that increase instructional certainty), (b) reflective practice (self-examination of one's own instruction that leads to better clarity and coherence), (c) research (exploration and investigation to discover ways to improve one's practice), and (d) collaboration (focused interchange with colleagues to give and receive ideas and assistance). Selecting which of these various functions staff development should serve is largely a function of at what stage of the school improvement process the organization is in at that point in time.

Conceptualizing the school improvement process in the framework of Lewin's (1951) force field analysis model, Beach and Lindahl (2004) identified the three major phases of school improvement as being: (a) *planning*, (b) *implementation*, and (c) *institutionalization*. Although the school improvement process is presented in three linear phases, that can be a deceptive over-simplification. In reality, these phases often collapse into each other, and results overlap from phase to phase; in other cases, organizations enter into the implementation or institutionalization phases and experience temporary setbacks that cause them to revisit an earlier phase. Each of the various purposes of staff development tends to be more important or appropriate at different stages of the school improvement process.

As the organization moves along the school improvement process, its members move along a continuum of what Hall and Hord (2001) termed *stages of concern*. As with the school improvement process, these stages are not entirely linear, and the flow is not unidirectional. The lowest stage of concern on Hall and Hord's hierarchy is *awareness*. At this stage, the individual has little concern about involving him or herself with the proposed changes. The next stage is *informational*; in this stage, the individual expresses a general awareness of the changes and an interest in learning more about them. This gives way to the *personal* stage, in which the individual begins to experience concerns about his or her ability to effect the change successfully and with his or her role in regard to the changes. In the *management* phase, the individual focuses his or her attention on the processes and tasks associated with the innovations and with the gathering and utilization of information and resources. In the subsequent *consequences* stage, attention becomes focused on the impact of the changes on individuals and on ways in which positive consequences might be enhanced. In the *collaboration* stage, the individual seeks coordination and collaboration with others on the implementation of the changes. Finally, in the *refocusing* stage, the individual seeks to gain a comprehensive overview of the changes and their effects on individuals and the organization, which may help to guide further changes or future actions. Again, at each of these stages, certain forms and purposes of staff development become more appropriate than others.

Although it would be logistically ideal, and is often necessary, to offer the same staff development to all members of the organization, research (Rogers, 1995) has shown that some individuals will adopt innovations more readily than others. Until an individual is ready to adopt an innovation, intensive staff development on that change may be less than productive for that individual. Rogers's research on the adoption of technological innovations found that 2.5% of individuals in organizations are the *innovators* who propose new approaches. The next group to adopt these innovations is the *early adopters* (13.5%). This group provides mentoring and modeling for the next group (34%), the *early majority*. This group provides the critical mass necessary to convince a more risk-averse group (34%) of *late majority* to begin implementing the innovations. This leaves approximately 16% of the organization as *laggards*, who may or may not ever accept the innovations. Joyce and Showers (1988) presented similar constructs, but utilized classifications such as *gourmet omnivores*, *active consumers*, *passive consumers*, and *reticents*.

Early in the planning stage of a school improvement process, the major concern is awareness. At first, this concern will be held only by the small group of *innovators*, who should be the focus of the staff development efforts at this point. These *innovators* will work to convince the *early adopters* to accept the innovations or changes as the organization enters the early stages of the implementation phase of the school improvement process. As this occurs, both groups need staff development focused on *information*, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the changes successfully. However, the crucial early majority must now be engaged in *awareness* level staff development if they are to be coaxed into experimenting with the innovations. With the organization now engaged in the implementation phase, these *early majority* members need staff development focused on *information*, whereas those *innovators* and *early adopters* may well be at the *personal* stage of concern and need far different forms of staff development. At the same time, some staff development may be appropriate for the *late majority* and *laggards*, in order to continually promote their *awareness*. This pattern varies with the specific circumstances of the school and each improvement process, but the matching of school improvement process stages, stages of concern, and adoption patterns of individuals with the proper staff development is essential if the changes are to be successfully implemented and institutionalized.

The interactive effects of these variables make staff development a far more complex process than many schools or districts recognize. The one-size-fits-all approach so often used for staff development may help to explain the dismal failure of so many school improvement efforts and the lack of results to which Achilles (2004) pointed. Careful mapping of both organizational and individual needs, concerns, and readiness is essential in choosing the purpose, and, consequently, the format, of each staff development effort.

DELIVERY FORMATS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This wide variety of organizational and personal needs calls for an equally diverse array of staff development formats (see Table 2). Individual learning styles (Dunn & Griggs, 2000; Sternberg & Zhang, 2000) also contribute to the need for varied staff development delivery formats. Each of these formats has strengths and weaknesses that tend to make it more effective or efficient for specific learning purposes or at different phases of the school improvement process. It has been several decades since the stereotypical workshop or presentation format has been considered universally sufficient, or, as DuFour (1997) noted, since one could "identify a relevant topic and provide a speaker who could inform and inspire".

Entering the implementation phase of the school improvement process, as one or more groups, e.g., *innovators* and *early adopters* or *gourmet omnivores* and *active consumers*, decide to pursue the changes, far more intensive training, practice, and mentoring/coaching become essential staff development components. As more of the organization, e.g., *early* and *late majority* or *active* and *passive consumers*, progress through this implementation stage, more reflective and/or collaborative forms of staff development become essential if the organization is to begin to institutionalize the new practices and beliefs. To this end, peer coaching, action research, and teams or study groups may assist the organization to customize the innovations to its specific needs and circumstances, while producing the type of normative/re-educative changes Chin and Benne (1985) considered essential to cultural change and institutionalization of the improvements.

As the Association for Information Technology in Teacher Education (2005), Hirsh (2002), and the U. S. Department of Education (1996a & b) cautioned, it is crucial that proper time be reserved for staff development. Time is a key resource for all school personnel. If arrangements are not made for teachers to be given adequate,

Table 2. Staff Development Formats Recommended by Leading Authorities in the Field.

Format	Citations
Needs assessment and presenting	Sparks, 1983
Presentation of theory or description of skill	Fullan, Bennett, & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990; Joyce & Showers, 1980; NSDC, 2005a; Sparks, 1983
Modeling or demonstration	Joyce & Showers, 1980; Sparks, 1983
Reflective practice in real or simulated sessions	Fullan, Bennett, & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990; Joyce & Showers, 1980; Sparks, 1983
Structured or open-ended feedback	Joyce & Showers, 1980; Sparks, 1983
Mentoring/coaching for application	Blase & Blase, 2004; Fullan, 1982; Joyce & Showers, 1980, 1988; NSDC, 2005a; Sparks, 1983
Peer coaching	Blase & Blase, 2004; Fullan, Bennett, & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990; NSDC, 2005a
Action research/inquiry	Sergiovanni (1996/1997)
Collaboration, study groups, lesson, article, or book sharing	Blase & Blase, 2004; Fullan, Bennett, & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990; NSDC, 2005a
School visits, observing classrooms, walkthroughs	Blase & Blase, 2004; NSDC, 2005a

convenient time for participation in staff development activities, preparation for implementation, reflection, inquiry, evaluation, and collaboration, it is not likely that the innovations will ever become fully implemented or institutionalized. For example, as related to the practical application of innovative practices in classrooms, Joyce (2002) found that a teaching model of medium complexity requires a minimum of 20 to 25 classroom trials over an 8 to 10 week period (p. 74). Similarly, studies on mentoring (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000; Education Commission of the States, 1999; National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 2002; O'Brien, Collins, Hogan, & Rowe, 1999) have found that unless adequate, convenient time is provided to the mentor and his or her protégé, the process is unlikely to yield the desired results.

In organizations that have successfully passed through these various school improvement process stages and accompanying staff development, it becomes crucial that plans and resources (time, funding, and qualified personnel) exist to provide similar learning for new organizational members. Often, it is not possible to re-create the same staff development formats and opportunities originally offered, as these are no longer relevant to anyone but the new organizational members and economy of scale makes their use infeasible. On the individual or small group level, the same needs may well exist as those already provided for by the organization for the bulk of its members. Mentoring has proven to be a highly successful approach for promoting similar awareness, knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and for offering assistance to new colleagues (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000; Daloz, 1999; Education Commission of the States, 1999; Flaxman, 1992; National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 2002; O'Brien, Collins, Hogan, & Rowe, 1999).

BUILDING A CULTURE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN A SCHOOL

As presented to this point, all of these staff development efforts are directed to what Argyris and Shon (1978) termed *single loop learning*; in other words, they are designed to provide individuals and the organization with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to implement the desired changes of a specific school improvement process. As Senge (1990) so ably pointed out, this is an insufficient goal; instead, the organization should pursue *double loop* or even *deutero learning* (Argyris & Shon, 1978), implying that the organization must not only master the current changes but better capacitate itself for making similar changes in the future. Senge (1990) and Brandt (2003) called this type of organization a *learning organization*. Other authorities (DuFour, 1997; Hirsh, 2002) have termed it a *learning community*.

Regardless of terminology, these organizations possess a series of qualities that allow them to convert *single loop* staff development into systemic preparation for the future, as well. Brandt (2003) identified ten such qualities:

- Incentive structures that encourage adaptive behavior
- Challenging but achievable goals
- Members who can accurately identify the organization's stages of development
- Information that is gathered, processed, and acted upon
- Organizational knowledge bases and processes for creating new ideas
- Frequent exchanges of information with relevant external sources
- Feedback on products and services
- Continual refinement of their basic processes
- Supportive organizational cultures
- Open systems, sensitive to the external environment

Hirsh (2002) pointed out the benefits of team learning, which recognizes and builds upon the strengths of each team member for the interdependent accomplishment of goals. However, as Little (1989) cautioned, collegiality in itself does not necessarily lead to a *learning organization*. Contrived collegiality does not work; only an organization in which both leadership and informal cultures support true collegiality can be effective (Butler, 1992).

However, it is Senge's (1990) work that provides the clearest insight into what it takes to build a culture of continuous improvement and staff development. He discussed five disciplines as contributing to such a *learning organization*: (a) building shared vision; (b) team learning; (c) a commitment to lifelong learning; (d) attainment of personal mastery, a discipline of continual clarification and deepening of one's vision, focusing of energies, and objectively viewing reality; and (e) systems thinking. It is the development of such reflective, constructivist cultures and organizations that allows *single loop* learning to advance to *double loop* learning.

SUMMARY

As Chin and Benne (1985) pointed out, change can be mandated and can also be effected by presenting information and data that lead individuals and organizations to make rational decisions for initiating needed changes. However, to institutionalize a change in behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and culture, true learning must occur. Consequently, staff development should be a key component of most major school improvement processes. Staff development serves varying purposes at various stages of the school improvement process, corresponding to individual and organizational needs and stages of concern. To serve these varying purposes, a variety of staff development formats must be utilized, often in carefully planned combinations. When integrated with other elements of the school improvement process, staff development can not only help to implement and institutionalize the desired changes but also can further capacitate the organization as a learning community and facilitate future improvement efforts. Although best practice in staff development is a highly complex issue and proven effects of staff development on student performance are not yet well documented, properly designed and implemented staff development intuitively would appear to be an essential component of effective school improvement.

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Project-Based Instruction: Eight Interview Questions You Should Ask Special Education Teacher Candidates and How to Score Them

Joe Nichols and Joan Henley

INTRODUCTION

As prospective educational leaders leave university-preparation programs and enter the field as practitioners, it is essential that they exit with the skills needed to interview teacher candidates. The area of special education poses a unique set of circumstances for school leaders involved in interviewing staff. Teaching techniques, legal mandates, and a “language” that is unique to that particular field are all barriers that must be encountered by practitioners, who otherwise have no pedagogical background, other than a survey course, in special education.

The use of Project-Based Instruction provides leadership candidates with authentic experiences in personnel administration. This type of instruction incorporates expertise-oriented evaluation (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004), cooperative learning (Eggan & Kauchack, 1996), field-based strategies (Rebore, 2004), and the utilization of professional literature to validate the need for a course project. As a result of this approach to instruction, Educational Leadership candidates exit their programs of study having experienced designing a line of questioning for interviewing personnel and utilizing those questions in a simulation where applicants are interviewed and selected for positions (Nichols, 2004).

Expertise-oriented evaluation (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004) involves utilizing the professional experiences and subsequent insights of course participants and practitioners in the field of education to conduct needs assessments and to categorize those needs in a meaningful fashion. This type of evaluation “depends primarily on professional expertise to judge an institution, program, product, or activity” (p.112).

Cooperative learning (Eggan & Kauchack, 1996) is defined as “a cluster of learning strategies that actively involve students in group work towards a common goal” (p.349). It involves collaboration, brainstorming, and discussion, with the desired outcome of producing a workable document or system that will be functional and legally compliant.

Field-based instructional strategies (Rebore, 2004) incorporate activities that are conducted in a school setting through the use of simulation. With regard to the interviewing and employment of personnel in a school setting the following activities would be simulated:

1. Writing a job description
2. Establishing selection criteria
3. Writing a job vacancy announcement
4. Selecting and interviewing candidates
5. Interviewing candidates
6. Selecting and recommending the best candidate for employment
7. Notifying unsuccessful candidates (p.121–129)

Professional literature that relates to a course project is provided by the instructor and also by course partici-

pants in the form of a required literature review. The review of related literature validates a project by identifying that the simulation being encountered by course participants is one that has concerns that reach beyond a local or regional scope.

The simulations and review of literature provide course participants not only with the actual authentic experiences that are encountered in personnel administration in a school district setting, but also provides them with strategies that have been researched and identified as best practice with respect to individual dignity, diversity, and sound legal principle.

THE PROJECT

As a result of the lack of qualified special education teachers in the nation's classrooms (Billingsly, 2004), fifteen students who were candidates for the Ed. S. Degree in Educational Leadership at Arkansas State University, engaged in a project of constructing a set of interview questions for potential special education teachers. The candidates, each employed in rural school districts, were pursuing licensure in the superintendency, with an area of specialization in Special Education Administration. All the candidates were licensed special education teachers. Twelve were teaching in special education classrooms at the time of the project completion and three were practicing building-level administrators.

Students were charged to develop a set of interview questions that could be asked of applicants who were interviewing for special education teaching positions. They were instructed to construct questions that were specifically limited to special education content. This limitation was placed on the project with the understanding that the line of questioning developed would be supplemental to a district's comprehensive interviewing protocol. Students were also instructed to construct a scoring rubric for each interview question to determine the strength of applicants' responses to the questioning.

So no single course participant could dominate or choose not participate in the discussions leading to a final product, each candidate was required to provide evidence of participation in the project. Each activity, conducted in the process of interview question development, required course participants to submit artifacts that would identify them as contributors to discussion.

PROJECT RATIONALE

The rationale for this project was developed after professional literature indicated the following interviewing shortfalls:

1. Few rural school districts engaged in a protocol for interviewing teachers;
2. There exists a significant shortage of qualified special education teachers in the nation's schools
3. The legislation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has placed significant constraints on the qualifications of special education teachers
4. Interviewers in school districts don't always ascertain the information needed to employ qualified staff and determine the professional development needs for those employed who may be under-qualified.

In a study conducted by Nichols (2004), it was determined that few rural school districts had a protocol for recruiting or interviewing teacher candidates. Most of these school districts made employment decisions based on one-sided conversations, instinct, or desperation to fill their classrooms with a certificated teacher.

Many who conduct interviews determine characteristics of good teachers based solely on a perceived idea of a sound work ethic. A study conducted at Clayton College and State University (2001–2003) indicated that employment decisions are made by focusing on 10 work ethics that employers have found to be very important. They are: (a) attendance (b) character (c) teamwork (d) appearance (e) attitude (f) productivity (g) organizational skills (h) communication (i) cooperation (j) respect. The study recognized that employers want teachers with the pedagogical skills needed for their teaching assignments, but in reality placed a greater focus on job candidates possessing the work ethic that provides more generalized evidence of success in the instructional process.

According to Bays (2004), educational leaders have a large list of recognized duties including recruiting, interviewing, and recommending the employment of personnel. A focus within those parameters of leadership is the function of securing instructional staff for special education programs. This can become especially cumbersome due to the unique educational needs of the students involved and the laws that govern that particular area of education.

Caggiano (1998) indicates that many interviewers confuse the process specific to recruiting and interviewing. When recruiting and interviewing are not approached as separate functions, applicants are provided with little opportunity to verbalize and reveal the skills they bring to the profession. The interviewer often dominates discussions during the interview by articulating the organization's strengths and philosophies of work performance while discerning little from an applicant regarding his or her qualifications for a position. With this in mind, it could be reasonably assumed that during the brief time allocated to interviewing teachers, many interviewers are discussing details that could have been provided during a recruiting phase of employment. Issues such as district goals, employee expectations, salary, benefits, and community offerings are ones which could have been provided to an applicant in an informational brochure prior to the interview which would have allowed time for interviewers to discern an applicant's qualifications.

Concerns for Quality Special Education Instruction

As educational leaders search for teachers to man special education classrooms, they are facing not only the dilemma of having an adequate pool of certificated teachers, but are also encountering the added burden of securing teachers who meet the definition of being highly qualified.

According to the US Department of Education (2005), teacher attrition and the emerging definitions of highly qualified teachers in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) are making the recruitment and subsequent employment of special education teachers a daunting task. While the act recognizes the difficulties in securing special education teachers, few solutions are offered for their actual recruitment and employment, especially in rural and inner-city school districts.

We now know that teacher preparation programs produce adequate numbers of teachers. The problems are that teachers are not distributed where the needs are the greatest and teacher attrition rates are high, particularly in the first few years of teaching. America faces teacher distribution shortfalls related to subject areas and grade levels as well as rural and urban locations.

Suburban schools historically have had access to an adequate pool of qualified teachers, whereas inner-city schools, high-need schools and those in the most isolated rural areas have suffered staffing shortages. While nationally researchers have illustrated that enough teachers are being produced, individual school districts often face obstacles to placing well-prepared teachers into the classroom. Districts in high-need, high-growth, rural and outlying areas are challenged with recruiting teachers to the area and struggle especially with meeting their demand for qualified teachers in high-need subject areas. (p. 31)

To further complicate the issue of securing special education personnel, the U.S. Department of Education (2005) states that a highly qualified teacher "must demonstrate content mastery in each subject area taught" (p.32). This indicates that special education teachers must have content mastery in every subject across the curriculum, because every subject is represented in special education classrooms in the nation's schools where "thirteen percent (of enrolled students) receive services through Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)" (p. 13).

According to Billingsly (2004), the United States Department of Education data from the school year 2000–2001 revealed an excess of 47,500 teachers who were teaching in special education classrooms lacked the appropriate certification required by their state departments of education for licensure. Among that number, one in three was a beginning teacher with three or fewer years of experience. It was further indicated that attrition of special education teachers was a major contributor to the shortage within the profession with nearly one-half of licensed special education teachers leaving the profession within their first five years of teaching.

Darling-Hammond (2000) describes highly qualified teachers as individuals who exhibit creativity, flexibility, and adaptability. Beyond personality characteristics, highly qualified teachers are defined as those who have good verbal skills, good content knowledge in the field in which they teach, and a vast repertoire of teaching

strategies to meet individual student needs. Allbritten, Mainzer and Ziegler (2004) express concerns that these characteristics may be beyond reach when discussing the instructional needs of the vast and diverse population of students with disabilities.

To determine whether or not special education teachers are highly qualified, or are simply licensed to teach children with disabilities, school districts may want to consider a line of interview questioning specific to applicants for positions in this area.

THE PROJECT OUTCOME

Utilizing reviews of professional literature and their expertise as teachers of children with disabilities, course participants discussed several concerns regarding the employment of special education teachers. Many of these concerns were also based on participant's observations of the employment of special education personnel in their respective school districts. The concerns discussed were as follows:

1. District and building-level educational leaders have limited knowledge of special education instructional methodologies resulting in them not asking pertinent questions of applicants who are pursuing positions in teaching children with disabilities.
2. Many who are applying for teaching positions in special education programs have secured alternative licensure and have had little or no experience in teaching children with disabilities.
3. Some who are applying for licensure to teach children with disabilities have only been required to pass an exam such as the Praxis in order to secure initial licensure. Many have only completed a survey course that describes the characteristics of children with varying disabilities.
4. Those with alternative licensure have not been provided a specific plan of professional development to assist them in becoming effective instructors.
5. Many building level administrators focus on reactive discipline techniques in regard to students with disabilities and focus on few interview questions regarding behavior management accomplished through classroom instruction.
6. Few teachers new to special education have had experiences with directing the work of a paraprofessional in the classroom setting.
7. Few teachers new to special education realize the impact that a special needs child has on a family.
8. Teachers who have had limited preparation in teaching children with disabilities also have had limited experiences in working with regular education staff members who will be part of the instructional process.

Course participants focused on the eight concerns when they considered a line of interview questioning for applicants for special education teaching positions. Since there is such a variety of teaching areas within the field of special education, participants attempted to construct interview questions that provided insight into an applicant's knowledge of instruction for children with mild to moderate disabilities. They refrained from constructing questions that focused on knowledge of students with low-incidence or severe disabilities.

Based on the concerns previously mentioned, project participants aligned interview questions with the following:

1. Instructional methodology
2. Instructional experience
3. Professional development in the area of special education
4. Classroom management
5. Para-professional management
6. Family issues of children with disabilities
7. Peer relationships with faculty and staff (inclusive settings).
8. The use of technology for instructional and non-instructional purposes in special education settings

Instructional methodology was selected as a question focus to determine not only an applicant's knowledge of the issues, but also to determine what program of professional development may need to be arranged to address an employee's deficiencies.

Instructional experience was selected as question focus to give interviewers insight into the extent an applicant had worked with children with disabilities both within and outside of instructional settings. Also, interviewers wanted to determine what areas of disabilities that applicants had encountered in the instructional and non-instructional process.

Interviewers developed a focus on professional development to determine what level of preparation the applicant had encountered and what the applicant's plans were for continued professional preparation in the teaching field. This line of questioning was also developed to provide interviewers with insights as to the applicant's intentions to remain in the area of special education without just asking them whether or not they planned to remain in the field. Many project participants had encountered special education teachers who only took positions to "get their foot in the door" with school districts and then left when another position would become available in which the teacher was licensed.

Project participants felt as if they should refrain from using the word "discipline" in the interviewing process. Instead, they chose to address discipline through classroom management. The participants felt as if this projected a more positive image and a proactive approach to managing student behavior. Primarily, they wanted to determine if the applicant was proactive or reactive in the management of student behavior.

Since many special education teachers are assisted by paraprofessionals in the classroom, project participants developed a line of questioning to determine how and to what extent candidates would be utilized them in the classroom. Would they only be used for clerical tasks? Would they be directed to assist in instruction? Do they have any inclination of how to supervise a paraprofessional in the classroom setting?

A major concern of all the participants was the issue of family involvement in the education of children with disabilities. Concerns expressed ranged from getting parents to attend IEP meetings to the recognition that some parents were incapable of providing instructional help to their children in the home setting. The ability to collaborate with parents was seen as an essential and critical skill needed by special education teachers.

The final concern expressed was one in which an applicant would incorporate the use of technology in the education of children with disabilities. Technology was considered of great importance, because its use involves significantly more than the use of computers. A working knowledge of assistive devices utilized through related services was mentioned as a major component of a perspective teacher's repertoire of skills necessary to function in the special education teacher's position. The use of computers was also a major concern. Would the teacher use computers as an instructional tool? Would they use them solely to complete the paper-work, such as IEP programs that are common to all school districts in many states?

Although some commonalities exist among all teachers in the field of education, many of the concerns are unique to the special education instructional setting. Course participants therefore considered it important to construct a line of questioning unique to the special education teacher candidate.

Eight Interview Questions

As a result of the concerns and critical issues that course participants noted, eight questions were developed which would provide insight into a special education teacher applicant's knowledge of each area. The participants were instructed to develop questions that were measurable and to develop a rubric to measure the responses of an applicant.

The questions constructed were as follows:

1. What classroom management strategies would you incorporate in your classroom to ensure a quality learning environment?
2. Describe the instructional methods that you would incorporate into teaching students with mild to moderate disabilities.
3. How should a special education teacher engage in continuous professional growth?
4. What techniques would you employ to collaborate with building staff to improve the instruction and socialization of children with disabilities?

5. How would your experiences in the instruction of children with disabilities benefit the stakeholders in the school district?
6. How would you include and involve parents in their child's education?
7. How would you utilize a paraprofessional in your classroom?
8. How would you incorporate technology into the education of children with disabilities?

The participants constructed a rubric for each question and gave responses a value. A value of zero (0) indicated that the applicant has no knowledge or insight to the question asked. A value of one (1) indicated marginal insight into the question asked. A value of three (3) indicated general knowledge and insight into the question asked. A value of four (4) indicated that the applicant had significant insight into the question asked. The questions with the scoring rubric designed are as follows:

1. What classroom management strategies would you incorporate in your classroom to ensure a quality learning environment?

Response Value of 4: Describes multiple, specific classroom management strategies.

Response Value of 3: Discusses multiple classroom management strategies in non-specific terms.

Response Value of 1: Discusses only disciplinary or reactionary strategies.

Response Value of 0: Fails to discuss classroom management strategies.

2. Describe the methods that you would incorporate into instructing students with mild to moderate disabilities.

Response Value of 4: Reveals an understanding of multi-sensory and multicultural methodologies in a classroom setting.

Response Value of 3: Reveals an understanding of either multi-sensory or multi-cultural methodologies in a classroom setting.

Response Value of 1: Discusses instructional strategies in non-specific terms.

Response Value of 0: Reveals no clear understanding of instructional strategies.

3. How should a special education teacher engage in continuous professional growth?

Response Value of 4: Articulates a desire to a commitment of professional growth through membership in professional organizations, pursuit of formal coursework and/or pursuit of professional development in the field.

Response Value of 3: Indicates intent to pursue formal coursework or pursuit of professional development in the field.

Response Value of 1: Discusses a professional growth plan unrelated to special education.

Response Value of 0: No plans articulated.

4. What techniques would you employ to collaborate with the building staff to improve the instruction and socialization of children with disabilities?

Response Value of 4: Articulates multiple examples of collaboration with *both* certificated and classified personnel.

Response Value of 3: Articulates examples of collaboration with certificated personnel.

Response Value of 1: Speaks in non-specific terms regarding collaboration.

Response Value of 0: articulates no specific plans to engage in collaborative activities.

5. How would your experiences in the instruction of children with disabilities benefit the stakeholders in the school district?

Response Value of 4: Articulates a variety of experiences in multiple settings involving children with disabilities.

Response Value of 3: Articulates experience only in the instructional setting involving children with disabilities.

Response Value of 1: Articulates experiences in only an internship setting involving children with disabilities.

Response Value of 0: Articulates no experiences.

6. How would you include and involve parents in their child's education?

Response Value of 4: Identifies multiple methods of involvement that demonstrates flexibility to accommodate parents.

Response Value of 3: Discusses methods of communication that attempts to accommodate parents.

Response Value of 1: Discusses involvement only in procedural terms; i.e. conferences.

Response Value of 0: Articulates no discernable plan to engage parents in the child's education.

7. How would you use technology to improve student achievement?

Response Value of 4: Discusses a variety of ways to integrate curriculum utilizing multiple technologies, including assistive technologies.

Response Value of 3: Discusses utilization of technologies available in the classroom (computers, calculators, etc.)

Response Value of 1: Utilization of a single method of technology.

Response Value of 0: Has no experience in the utilization of technology.

8. How would you utilize a paraprofessional in your classroom?

Response Value of 4: Discusses utilizing paraprofessionals in clerical, instructional, and companion settings.

Response Value of 3: Discusses utilizing paraprofessionals as a clerical or instructional assistant within the classroom.

Response Value of 1: Utilizes paraprofessional only to assess and record student performance.

Response Value of 0: Has no suggestions for utilizing a paraprofessional.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of project-based instruction has been well received by course participants in School Personnel Administration. Course and professor evaluations conducted independently of the supervision of the professor have indicated this instructional methodology has provided a meaningful learning experience for course participants. Participants who completed the project relating to interview questions for special education teachers indicated that they received a great deal of insight into the leadership aspect of special education through their participation in this instructional design. A few of the comments were as follows:

1. I had never considered how important it was to design a set of interview questions unique to special education. It was an outstanding experience for me.
2. The hands-on experience was great. I will conduct business this way when I become a special education supervisor.
3. I learned so much and the class time went by so quickly. I never realized how important it is to do things correctly on the front-end of employing teachers.

As educational leaders are prepared for our nation's schools, the importance of their having authentic experiences in leadership activities is paramount. While it is assumed that these experiences will be provided in internships, professors may want to consider embedding these kinds of experiences in course work. Using this methodology requires that the professor take on the role of technical expert, facilitator, and sometimes referee.

One caution to those using this methodology is to make task orientation a priority. When facilitating discussions in this methodology, course participants can easily get distracted by wanting to discuss personal situations that have happened in their respective professional lives. This, in turn, can lead to nonproductive class sessions that emerge into "war stories" and negativity as opposed to creative thinking that leads to a viable product. While the methodology should incorporate healthy dialogue among course participants, the focus should always be on the project outcome.

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The Principal's Role in the Interview Process: A Best Practice

Charles R. Waggoner, Douglas Main and Robin Wells

There was a time when it was believed that good interviewers were born and not made (Gordon, 1992). The authors of this chapter believe, however, that a principal's interviewing skills can be greatly improved by guided learning experiences. As a corollary, the authors further deem that the abilities of the teacher as the interviewee could be enhanced through instruction and practice.

The P-12 teacher interview process can be very time consuming, stressful, and tedious no matter which side of the conversational desk you happen to be sitting. For the teacher interviewee there is a plethora of university courses, workshops, online activities, and books available of which the teacher candidates may access themselves in an attempt to improve the outcome of the interview. Basic interviewing skills for the candidate deal with everything from how to answer the most commonly asked administrator questions, how to dress, and how to display appropriate body language to how far in advance of the interview one should arrive. Interviewees believe that the quality of the interview improves with practice and the availability of prior discussion involving the "do's" and "don'ts" of the interview process (Waggoner, 2005).

The role of interviewing teacher candidates for the school is becoming more the responsibility of the building principal. Unfortunately, most beginning principals have a rather narrow conception of how to interview teacher candidates. They have had little or no formal training in this most vital process, other than the experience that they may have encountered being interviewed themselves both as teachers and administrators. So many complex demands are placed on the school principal, it is understandable that inconsistent and ambiguous messages often accompany these demands (Fullan, 2003). Selecting value driven candidates that match the identified strategies of the school is a leadership opportunity of enormous potential, and is one that should not be taken lightly.

A recent Lou Harris Poll found that ninety percent of Americans believe that placing a well-qualified teacher in the classroom is the best way to raise student achievement (Haselkorn & Harris, 2001). Fewer than twenty-five percent believe that their school district always hires the best teaching candidate. Americans unequivocally state that the highest priority of education reform should be to fix teaching (Haselkorn & Harris, 2001).

So, what are principals responsible for in their buildings? The answer is everything, not the least of which is the influencing, establishing, and sustaining of a school culture conducive to the continuous improvement of students and staff. A component of this charge is the authority to hire staff. Many in the field of teaching know that there is little that will deteriorate the learning climate of a building more than a disgruntled substandard teacher. Principals, as the interviewer of potential teachers for their buildings, are central to shaping a positive and professional school culture and climate. The work of interviewing and determining the value-driven behaviors, which underlie the interview, lead to the selection of a person who will positively shape the beliefs that foster learning in that particular building and district (Deal & Peterson, 1998).

Placing the most highly qualified and compatible professional in the classroom is considered to be one of the

most essential responsibilities in which any administrator will ever engage. A mistake in the teacher selection process will have implications for students, parents, staff, and administrators for as long as the individual remains in the classroom. Also, "everyone now understands that teachers make a difference" (Lansley, Siedentop, & Yinger, 2005, p. 13-14). Rosborg states "teachers are the most important component to not only a student's success, but also the school's success" (Rosborg, McGee, & Burgett, 2003, p.189). It stands to reason then, that the teacher interview process should be carefully planned and scrutinized prior to the employment of any candidate. Without a solid plan for areas of evaluation, the principal will go into the interview with no real idea of what is being looked for, what the school district needs, or how to glean the most important information from the candidate.

The scrutiny of principal preparation programs and the quality of training that aspiring principals receive has been a topic of contention and discussion for several years. The *National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration* concluded in 1987, "fewer than 200 of the country's 505 graduate programs in educational administration were capable of meeting necessary standards of excellence" (Griffith, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988, p. 20). The rest, said the commission, should be closed. The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation argued in 2003 that the administrative preparation programs in American colleges and universities "had declined so sufficiently that they should be scrapped" (Griffith, Stout, & Forsyth, 1987, p. 20).

Arthur Levine (2005) in *Educating School Leaders* found that "the overall quality of education administration programs in the United States to be poor and not relevant to the aspired job as a school principal" (p. 28). Principals surveyed in the Levine study stated that many administrative preparation courses were "abstract and poorly integrated with practice" (Levine, 2005, p. 29). We believe that students at all levels need to be engaged in a rigorous hands-on learning experience that will create "real world" learning situations.

The role of the principal in the interview process is complex. Some aspects of the process include: (a) formulating relevant and motivating questions; (b) establishing a communicative atmosphere; (c) delivering the question; (d) listening to the response of the question; (e) observing the respondent's nonverbal behaviors; and (f) evaluating and recording the information. Unless there is a structured classroom activity provided for aspiring principals, it is not likely they will think about the interview process at all until the time comes when they must conduct one. From classroom conversations with aspiring principals, it has become clear that many students believe that interviewing candidates can be a spontaneous conversation that does not necessarily merit much formal prior consideration other than establishing a meeting time.

A list of prepared purposeful questions to be asked along with some expectation of the best response is the focus of pre-interviewing planning. It is very difficult to ask precise and illuminating questions of candidates if the interview is desultory. Questions prepared beforehand, with the best expected answer, enables the interviewer to focus on the other person's answers and body language instead of contemplating the next question or becoming lost in the response.

Specific answers are invaluable because they give insights into the experience, skills, credibility, deductive reasoning, comprehension, and communication skills of the candidate. The authors believe that if the questions are carefully crafted, the philosophical attitudes of the candidate can be ascertained. There should be some other outcome from a teaching interview other than, as some professional business counselors have suggested, "The interview is important, but when in doubt trust your gut!" (Perrin & DeDominic, 2006).

THE ENMU MODEL

Three assistant professors at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) embarked on a series of classroom units that would enable both the preservice or novice teacher and the aspiring principal to engage in meaningful experiences that would enhance the learning process of what makes a successful interview. The definition of a successful interview from the interviewer's perspective is not necessarily finding the person to whom the job will be offered at any one particular interview, but being able to ascertain through qualitative means the essence of the candidate. The students were enrolled in teacher training special education classes and in the counselor certification program. The aspiring principals were part of an educational administration class known as "systems communications."

The individuals who took part in the project are what statisticians would call a sample of convenience: They were conveniently available as students in classes and were willing to participate. This convenience sample was

professionally diverse. For example, the students in the counseling course were graduate students who were taking classes to obtain a counseling endorsement. The students in the special education class were undergraduates with no certified classroom experience, working on initial teacher licensure. The students in the principal preparation class were certified teachers engaged in study to become administratively certified as building principals.

Each student in all of the courses volunteered and then signed a waiver to be a participant in the interview process, as well as permission to be videotaped during the actual interview (Rosemarin, 2006). The purpose of the videotaping was so that both the interviewee and the aspiring principal candidate, acting as the interviewer, would be able to further analyze their own particular performance. The videotaping was part of the classroom exercise and was engaged only during the actual generic ten open-ended questions that were asked to all of the would-be candidates. When actually used as part of a “real” interview process, the video camera should only be activated when the questions being asked are utilized for all candidates for the position. Personal information questions asked during an actual interview such as experience, address, etc. should not be videotaped.

It was the responsibility of the professors to alleviate the fears that are a part of the videotaping of the interview. Professors explained that the use of videotaping would enable the teaching candidate to better understand the quality and completeness of their answers to the questions, vocabulary and grammar usage, and body language. The prospective principals understood that the interview was being recorded not only for all of the reasons mentioned above and in addition, so that important information provided by the candidate would not be forgotten and comparisons could be made of each candidate that interviewed for that particular position.

As part of the “systems communications” class, the aspiring principals discussed the in-depth qualitative interview process as a focused attempt to elicit conversation that would aid the interviewer in better understanding the candidate. The interview is termed “focused” because the principal is attempting to direct the conversation of the candidate into areas about which the principal is concerned. Although the interview is structured and focused, the questions are open-ended to the extent that candidates express diverse responses and sometimes grade level or subject area pedagogical biases. For example, there appears to be a difference in the way that P-6 teachers and 7-12 teachers answer the following question:

Question: You assign a project for the entire class to do that will take some time in class and out of class and will last for one week. One student asks if he may substitute the project that you have assigned for another one, because he does not think that he would enjoy what you have assigned. What would you do?

Ninety percent of the P-6 candidates said that they would allow the student to switch projects if the project that the student had in mind incorporated the same lesson objectives that the teacher was trying to teach. Only thirty-five percent of the 7-12 candidates interviewed would be willing to allow the student to pursue his own project and disregard the one assigned by the teacher. The most common reason for disallowing the student request by far was that it would not be fair to the other students.

As a follow up to the above question, whether or not the candidate specifically used the word “fair” in the answer to the proceeding question was:

Question: What do K-12 students mean when they say that they want their teacher to treat them fairly?

Once again we noticed a difference in the way that the P-6 candidates and the 7-12 candidates answer the question. Sixty-five percent of the P-6 candidates answered with language to the effect that being fair meant to give the individual student what he needed or to treat the students as individuals. Only five percent of the 7-12 group used these words or expressed this idea. Eighty percent of the 7-12 teachers said that being fair means, “to treat all students equally.” Only twenty percent of the P-6 teachers gave this response.

There is a difference in the way that candidates answer this question based perhaps upon the age of the students that they are trained to teach. In reality, there is not a necessarily right or wrong answer to the questions that the principal asked. However, there is a teaching philosophy point to be made and depending upon the perspective of the principal interviewer, one answer or the other may be more correct.

The principal should come to the interview with a philosophical perspective and ask questions, looking for answers, which will enable the principal to recommend the candidate that best fits the school climate orientation. The authors’ particular bias is that all teachers should have a “child focused” approach to the classroom.

It was concluded that the same questions should be asked of all candidates for a particular position. This is the

only way to ensure that the candidates will be judged on a level playing field. The questions are designed to seek out the “philosophy” of the candidate, the philosophy that best matches that of the school in the approach to children.

Several interviewers had a very firm belief that it was important for teachers to be friendly with their students. Therefore the following question was asked of all candidates:

Question: The advice has been given to beginning teachers that they should not smile until Christmas. What do you think of that advice?

Candidates who agreed with the advice had much different responses than those who took exception to the advice, as not being such a good idea. The difference between the way that P-6 teachers and 7-12 teachers respond is significant. Seventy-five percent of the 7-12 candidates agreed with the advice, compared to 0% of the P-6 candidates. Once again, the rightness or wrongness of the answer depends upon the predilections of the interviewer; but if the philosophical point is important, formulate the question, ask it to all of the candidates, and listen to the response.

Quantitative interviewing requires that the interviewer listen carefully to hear the meaning of what is being said. Listening skills need to be developed word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence, and the importance of videotaping the interview for review cannot be over-stressed. From the perspective of the principal, interviewing is time consuming. A good interview should last somewhere between sixty and ninety minutes. To attempt more than two interviews in a single day is exhausting and can become boring by the end of the second interview, particularly if the candidate is obviously not of high quality.

In the quest to find the “best teacher” for the teaching climate, the principal should not interview less than ten candidates if ten candidates with the proper credentials apply. In the case of elementary teachers it may be possible that over one hundred applicants will make application. Limiting the pool of interviewees to ten will greatly increase the chances that the perfect selection will be made. For example, when it comes to calculus instructors, for example, the number of viable options likely will be less. The point is that “no stone should be left unturned” when it comes to selecting the most important component of education, the classroom teacher. This is where the videotape of the interview gives the principal verification of what transpired and enables others the ability to view the top candidates on film.

It is not uncommon for the principal to be interviewing for several open positions within the building over a period of several weeks or months. Without videotape it is very difficult even with copious notes to remember in June a candidate who was interviewed in February. In the absence of available videotaping, it is recommended that the principal ask the candidate if a digital picture can be taken that may be printed and attached to their file. It needs to be explained to the candidate that it will enable the interviewer to remember them with a higher degree of accuracy. One of the authors of this article has conducted over 800 interviews in the course of a thirty-year administrative career and was never turned down in his request to allow videotaping or taking a picture of the candidate.

He credits his interviewing success to Gallup, Inc., which has developed a standardized teacher interview for screening the potential of teachers called *The Teacher Perceiver Interview*. In an effort to give the hiring process more scientific validity, Gallup, Inc. interviewed master teachers and gleaned the answers that the master teacher gives most often (Gallup, Inc., 1993).

The systems communications class determined that the following 10 questions would be asked of all candidates regardless of the grade-level licensure being sought and whether or not the candidate was a practicing teacher as was the case with those seeking counselor certification, or were working on their initial degree as was the case with students enrolled in special education classes. Furthermore, the class agreed upon what were to be considered “successful” response themes and “unsuccessful” response themes. The best interview systems identify key attitudes and behaviors desired in the classroom.

THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THEMES

Some of the key questions included the following.

Question 1: Why did you choose a career in the profession of teaching?

Successful themes—“to help students,” “to do something for future generations,” “I have always wanted to be a teacher.” Some display of enthusiasm for teaching through the eyes, a smile, or other body language should be noted.

Unsuccessful themes—“I get my summers off,” “the work is clean, I don’t have to get dirty,” “I will have the same days off as my kids,” “for the money,” “there are lots of job opportunities.”

Question 2: Who is the most important to our future: a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, or a scientist?

Successful themes—Must select the teacher no matter how important other professions are, and give reasoning such as “all professions no matter how important have had teachers.”

Unsuccessful themes—“doctor because,” “lawyer because,” “scientist because.”

Question 3: How do you want your students to primarily see you as a teacher?

Successful themes—“as a kind, caring, person,” “as a person interested in their learning,” “as a friend.”

Unsuccessful themes—“as an authority figure,” “as the teacher,” “as the disciplinarian.”

Question 4: Describe for me the best teacher you have ever had in the classroom.

Successful themes—“made learning fun,” “really cared about the students,” “always prepared,” “made it interesting,” “smiled.”

Unsuccessful themes—Failure to articulate a positive caring relationship.

Question 5: How will you involve the parents in your classroom?

Successful themes—The candidate is able to name at least two specific ways or ideas.

Unsuccessful themes—The candidate is able to name only one specific plan, or has no ideas, or seems vague in the response.

Question 6: Your first teaching evaluation has some criticisms of your teaching methods. What would you do?

Successful themes—“ask the evaluator for help,” “try to seek ways on how I might improve,” “ask other colleagues for input.”

Unsuccessful themes—“I would consider it,” “nothing if I felt that my methods were okay,” “it would bother me.”

Question 7: Tell me about the qualities or characteristics of the best boss that you have ever had.

Successful themes—“nurturing relationship,” “supportive relationship,” “both on same page,” “understanding and kind.”

Unsuccessful themes—Any answer not indicating a personal amiable relationship.

Question 8: You assign a project for the entire class to do that will take some time in class and out of class and will last for one week. One student asks if he may substitute the project that you have assigned for another one, because he does not think that he would enjoy what you have assigned. What would you do?

Successful themes—“I would allow him to do his project,” “I would try to find a compromise between what I had assigned and what the student wanted to do.”

Unsuccessful themes—“it would not be fair to the class if I let him change projects,” “it is a class assignment, the entire class will do it,” “if I changed the project for one student, I would have thirty different projects.”

It should be noted that there was wide disagreement among the principal candidates on what should consist of a successful and unsuccessful theme to question 8. Several students felt that the themes above were exactly reversed. The successful answer to the question is determined by the philosophical and pedagogical predilections of the interviewer.

Question 9: What do students mean when they say they want their teacher to be fair?

Successful themes—“students should be treated as individuals,” “each student should be considered as a unique person and listened to as such.”

Unsuccessful themes—“all students should be treated equally,” “no favoritism is ever shown by the teacher.”

Question 10: The advice has been given to beginning teachers that they should not smile until Christmas. What do you think of that advice?

Successful themes—"the advice is silly, the teacher should smile at the students much of the time."

Unsuccessful themes—"good advice," "students will take advantage of the teacher if they are too friendly."

The principal candidates acting as interviewers often disagreed as to what constituted a successful answer to a particular question. *Question 3:* How do you want your students to primarily see you as a teacher generated answers from the interviewees that resulted in some classroom contention. All of the interviewers agreed that "a friendly teacher" is an important component, however, fifty percent of the interviewers wanted to hear something about the appropriateness and necessity of discipline in the classroom.

INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES

The teaching candidates interviewed were required to write a reflective paper about their impressions and the experience of being interviewed. Impressions of most concern to the interviewees were the following:

"What if I don't know the answer?" or, "What if I give a stupid response?"

"I saw the interviewer writing, I knew he was grading my interview. I thought to myself, I wonder if he thinks my answers are stupid."

The truth of the matter is that unless the answer to an interview question is preposterous or entirely misapplied in some manner, no answer should be considered inappropriate, and certainly never seen as stupid. Even if the response is not what this particular interviewer is "looking for", the interview is constructed in such a way that there is no rightness or wrongness to an individual answer. Every person who asks or answers the ten questions will have a philosophical bent as to what constitutes a better response.

"Personally, I did not feel that any of the questions were in any way related to my expertise in the special education environment."

Candidates for teaching positions should be aware that the interviewer could not be expected to be a curricular expert on all of the nuances of each curriculum or teaching area. The principal is seeking a good teacher, a person who relates to boys and girls in the way that best fits the needs of the school and the philosophy of the building. The administrator would assume, by the fact that the teacher has a teaching license, that they would be pedagogically competent. Other than the obvious, a teacher of social studies and a teacher of a foreign language employ most if not all of the same interpersonal skills in their classrooms. It is these interpersonal skills that should be the focus of the interview. The interviewer must assume from a review of the transcripts and again by virtue of the license that the candidate is competent in the subject area.

"The questions seemed more like personality questions rather than competency questions."

The video camera is a very common item used during the interview process. However, one comment was: "I was very distracted by the video camera." For the candidate to become distracted by it is a detriment and the video camera's presence should be perhaps embedded into pre-service discussion as a potential component of the interview process.

Another comment was: "I was very disappointed when I went in for my interview and expected at least my interviewer to be dressed professionally, rather than in casual attire. That lowered my interest for the interview and lowered my motivation in the way that I responded, because I did not want to be there anymore" (Wells, 2006). The literature is replete with advice on how to dress for the interview for both the professional environment and for an informal business casual environment. Little if any research has been conducted as to what the dress expectations are or should be for the interviewer. It would be assumed that the interviewer while conducting a professional interview would also be dressed as a professional. From one of the authors' personal experience of being interviewed for a high school principal position many years ago in Illinois, the candidate met the superintendent at his office and the superintendent was dressed in outdoor attire that turned out to be his fishing regalia. The superintendent proceeded to drive the candidate in his truck to the pond where he checked his "trout lines." On the way back to the school for the "formal interview" the superintendent stopped by a man plowing in

a field for an introduction. The man plowing turned out to be the president of the school board. On several occasions when this same author was interviewed before a board of education, it was not uncommon for some individuals to be in their “work attire,” which often for farmers consisted of blue jeans or overalls.

It is important for the candidate not to be surprised, or at least to show no surprise at what the interviewer may be wearing. Although it is certainly suggested that the interviewer dress in a professional manner, the interviewees have control over only their choice of attire, and while the interviewees may be offended by the lack of courtesy shown to them, it would be inappropriate of them to so indicate.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the end the principal must remember that she will live with the hiring decision at least for a time. It is essential that the principal look at each of the interviews and candidates as the most critical interview of her or her life. Give each interview equal value, even if you are more interested in other candidates for the position. It may be that the candidate who is ranked number three ends up being your top candidate because your top choices become unavailable for some reason.

The collaboration of the teacher interview process has occurred through two semesters in the courses of the authors. As we continue the joint venture, we will refine the process that has been determined to be quite advantageous to all participants. The authors agree that preparation for interviewees and interviewers alike is an area that should not be overlooked in appropriate courses of higher education.

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Leadership and Management in the Relationship Between Administrators, School Counselors and Local Decision Making Bodies: A Kentucky Perspective

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This study examined the relationships between educational leaders, school counselors, and local decision-making bodies. In Kentucky, the school governance body is called a Site Based Decision Making Council (SBDM). For this study, the authors chose to survey school counselors and school principals concerning these relationships. This study tested our findings against the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Standards for Quality in Counseling Programs (SACS, 2004). Those Standards for Quality include yearly assessment of the counseling program, ensuring each student access to a counselor, providing services in health and safety, providing support for special needs students, collaborating with other internal and external agencies, maintaining confidentiality, and providing information on child growth and development for adults.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past several decades, the federal and state governments have called for nationwide school reform. The need for this reform has been detailed in documents such as *A Nation at Risk* (United States Department of Education, 1983) and has culminated with *No Child Left Behind*. Each document has indicated that the United States public school system is ultimately failing its youth. The thrust of NCLB has been on increasing literacy, closing the achievement gap, and raising standardized test scores. This restructuring requires that the staff in each organizational structure in a school collaborate to achieve this higher bar of professional responsibility. School administrators work in partnership with a variety of professionals in order to make effective decisions. One relationship often overlooked and vital to the decision-making process is the relationship between administrators and school counselors (Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999).

Many studies have been conducted concerning administrators' beliefs concerning the counselors' role in the decision-making process. The studies found that many counselors consider their roles minimal and without direction (Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999). School counselors reported some of their responsibilities were clerical tasks as assigned by school administrators (Ponec & Brock, 2000). This exclusion from leadership leads to conflict between the two professionals instead of collaboration. The reason for this role confusion is a misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge on the part of the administrators. Administrators are not taught nor informed with regard to the specifics of school counselors' resources, abilities, expertise, skills, and knowledge. Schools counselors have an extensive background in learning processes, communication approaches, and mediation that could be helpful to administrators and teachers.

Brock and Ponec (2000) concluded that effective schools benefit from a positive relationship between school counselors and administrators. The avenues required to reach this effectiveness were discovered to include: (1)

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a defined role for the counselor, (2) trust and communication between the two professionals, and (3) support strategies provided by the counselor to the school (professional development). If a school has instituted these three components, the administrator has a new resource for information. The principal and the counselor should work cooperatively in the formulation of plans, programs, and interventions. The authors pose that this cooperation will ultimately improve learning in the school because students will have more support, administrators will be more educated (academically, socially, and developmentally), and teachers will be more knowledgeable of effective techniques to be implemented in the classroom.

Barbara Murray (1995) in the article, *Principals: Proponents of High School Guidance Programs*, advocates strategies which facilitate positive relationships between the counselor and the school. Her recommendations focus on the administrator's responsibility to integrate the school counselor into a specified and clear role adequately that utilizes his/her training. Murray advises principals to research professional organization for counselors, to educate themselves about effective guidance programs, to stay updated on counselor related laws and regulations, to communicate regularly with the counselor, and to include counselors in administrative decision-making processes. She states that when an administrator implements the above suggestions, the counselor will be more likely to be successful, to feel included and understood, and to focus on the students. Murray advises that the counselor be actively involved in the classroom, with teachers, in the community, and with the students.

Lippit states that counselors have the following roles:

1. advocate for the school and the students;
2. expert on a variety of subjects;
3. trainer to staff and to students;
4. alternative identifier of alternate decisions due to expertise;
5. collaborator with staff;
6. process Specialist facilitating decisions as a team;
7. fact finder through research; and
8. reflector serving as a catalyst. (Kaplan and Geoffrey, 1993)

Each of these eight roles is integral to the adaptation of the climate that will benefit a school. The profession of school counseling should not be pushed aside to the outskirts of education. These professionals can be very beneficial to teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. They should have a large role in decision-making and modifications made to the school since they have extensive knowledge and skills in the eight aforementioned roles. Instead of allowing the role confusion of school counselors to continue, Kaplan and Geoffrey propose to allow these experts to participate with the team of decision makers to improve the school's culture and ultimately the school as well.

A study conducted by Eleanor Wilmore (1993) surveyed Kellogg Foundation Scholar principals in elementary, middle, and high schools in Texas. The author chose a qualitative approach by interviewing chosen principals in rural districts with an average of 300 students per school. Wilmore questioned the administrators about the school counselor's role in the classroom, in the office, and in the decision-making process. After interviewing the administrators, the following trends were found:

1. administrators felt that counselors were over extended;
2. counselors held administrative roles as well as their required duties;
3. counselors were seen as highly beneficial;
4. administrators did not wish to extend current roles of the counselor;
5. administrators supposed that counselors would be more effective if their role was more defined; and
6. counselors have a variety of roles such as:
 - a. conducting academic tests,
 - b. dealing with social issues and
 - c. mediator between students, teachers, and administrators.

Wilmore uncovered that the roles of administrators and counselors were more congruent than different. The reason for the role confusion was attributed to the small staff and large amount of responsibilities. In order to better serve the students, teachers, counselor and administrator should collaborate in decision-making and duties by incorporating both pools of knowledge and experience. The author suggested that the roles would be more effective if more clearly defined. However, being short staffed forced the most effective collaboration. To complete the article, Wilmore suggested that all small, rural schools administrators work cooperatively to create a more effective school by sharing duties and communicating regularly.

West and Idol (1993) recognized three roles that the counselor could play on a leadership team: a change agent, team process facilitator, and team member. The first role as a change agent could hasten the choice of an intervention, modification, or proposed program. The authors detail an example of the counselor's ability to use assessment instruments to stratify member's concern for each proposed change. Another role in which a counselor can function is as a team process facilitator or observer. This would require the counselor to select behaviors to observe and report by providing feedback to the team. The most important role for a counselor to fulfill is that of a collaborative team member and acting as a facilitator and a mentor.

To begin an effective collaborative team for school reform, administrators need to structure an innovative group of professionals dedicated to altering the current course of the school and begin new practices and approaches. This leadership team will be critical to the improvement of school culture and overall education. The school counselor may act in a number of roles in assisting in the reformation of the school and should be asked to join the leadership team. Because of training and skills, counselors can support and assist administrators in the decision-making process in due course aiding the process of modification.

Sidener (1995) studied the school district of Dade, Florida to track the reformation and the beginning of SBM/SDM. Sidener and others examined a high school and others in the pilot program for seven years. These schools were given exemptions from state regulations and union requirements, thereby providing the local decision-making team full authority. The study scrutinized the "distribution of authority" and learning beliefs of the participants. The researcher used qualitative data to formulate conclusions. Interviewing of 38 participants from a variety of schools was the primary mode of data collection. The interviews and other data were reviewed during and at the end of the seven-year period with particular focus on one high school in the district.

Sidener (1995) found that the collaborative effort peaked after the initial year. However, the shift from federal and state authority to local did not go as smoothly as the administrators had hoped. Many teachers, parents, and community members resisted the change for the first few years and impeded the process. In the later years of the project, the researcher reported that the school blossomed because parents and teachers felt that they had an important role in the decision-making process. The researcher did criticize the school for not implementing a systematic approach to evaluating the process for yearly adaptations and modifications. Sidener believes this to be essential in SBM/SDM settings. Despite the pitfalls, all participants found SBM/SDM to be much more accommodating and productive than the previous governance structure because of their emotional involvement via commitment to the new structure. To conclude, Sidener shared her views of her observations and commented on the frustrations accompanying the adoption of the new approach. She suggested that communication is key in this process since many participants may become jaded, cynical, and negative.

Shoffner and Williamson (2000) created a seminar to aid principals' understanding of school counselors' purposes and roles. The seminar, offered to preservice administrators and counselors, met eight times with the goal to increase the appreciation of each occupation. Each meeting was two hours of discussion and collaborative work. The researchers began the first meeting by simply asking each professional what he/she felt were the responsibilities of counselors and administrators. Each group commented that the roles had many similar characteristics and that both could be described as child-centered and goal driven. Subsequent meetings required the participants to join work groups and prepare vignettes relating to the two disciplines. Each group was to edit the vignettes and answer questions identifying the problems, the steps, and the solutions of each. The administrators focused on problems and solutions while the counselors detailed the process of the issues. Both groups held that communication and understanding was vital in each vignette.

Shoffner and Williamson (2000) concluded that the seminar was beneficial to each group. This was validated through a survey that supported this belief and encouraged the furthering of such meetings between preservice professionals as well as in-service. The researchers promoted parallel conferences to begin at the collegiate level and continue throughout each professional's career. Both the groups and the researchers believed that sim-

Table 1. Demographics by Principal and Counselor.

		Principals			Counselors		
		Male				Female	
Gender			40			10	
			29			59	
Years of Experience			7.5			8.1	
School Grade level *		Ele	Mid	Sec	Ele	Mid	Sec
		38	14	17	38	14	17

*The counselor sample was selected randomly by grade level to match the principal returns. Due to missing data, some totals will not be consistent.

ilar seminars would facilitate understanding as well as an avoidance of role confusion, therefore, causing a higher level of collaboration within the school and school system.

Current research studies have illustrated the critical role the counselor can have in the public school administrative arena. Schools that form a cohesive, interdisciplinary, collaborative leadership team using the school counselor as a facilitator promote positive school environment and relationships, are successful, and improve student performance. The role confusion of counselors that often occurs often in schools can be avoided and eliminated with open and clear communication between the principal and school counselor. The school counselor can be a significant resource to teachers, to administrators, to the school board, to site-based decision making councils, and to the community. Administrators should aid in the formation of an alliance between these persons and work to impede the frequent dysfunctional relationships that seem to occur.

METHOD

Participants

Sixty nine principals returned the surveys for a return rate of 52%. An equal number of school counselors were selected from a data base containing 625 returns from a previous survey using a random stratified sampling method. Participants from Kentucky were surveyed to determine their beliefs on collaboration and involvement.

Table 1 includes gender, years of experience, and school grade level. Fifty eight percent of the principal respondents reported being male, while 42 percent reported being female. Of the counselors surveyed, 14% reported being male, while 86% reported being female. The mean years of experience for principals were 7.5 and for counselors were 8.1. Additionally, the sample was broken down by school grade level. Fifty-five percent of principals were elementary, 20% were middle, and 25% were secondary. For counselors, 55% were elementary, 20% middle school, and 25% secondary.

Table 2, question 1 asks “does your school have a SBDM Counseling sub-committee”? Fifty-one percent of principals said yes, while 27% of school counselors said yes. Table 2, question 2 asked principals do you believe that school counselors should be members of a SBDM. Forty-one percent responded yes. Table 2, question 3

Table 2. Beliefs Concerning the Relationship Between Counselors and the SBDM.

Concerns	Principals	Counselor
1. Does your school have a SBDM/Counseling Sub-committee?	51% Yes	27% Yes
2. Do you believe the school Counselors should be a member of the SBDM Council?	41% Yes	Not asked
3. Do you believe the school Counselors should be a member of the SBDM Council Counseling sub-Committee?	51% Yes	Not asked

Table 3. Beliefs about School Assessment on SACS Quality Standards for Support Services for Student Learning.

Does your school district or school assess and or evaluate your school's guidance services using any or all of the following criteria?				
SACS Measure	Principal		Counselor	
	Percent Answering Yes	Number (N) Answering Yes	Percent Answering Yes	Number (N) Answering Yes
1. overall counseling appraisal	58	40	76	51
2. ensures that each student has access to an adult advisor, mentor, or counselor	0	0	0	0
3. provides student services in the areas of health and safety	0	0	0	0
4. provides appropriate support for students with special needs	97	66	88	59
5. facilitates student assistance from other agencies	100	68	91	61
6. maintains confidentiality of records	100	68	97	65
7. provides educational opportunities to help parents and teachers understand the various stages of development	0	0	66	44

asked if “principals believed school counselors should be members of a SBDM sub-committee”. Fifty-one percent of principals said yes. Questions two and three were not on the original survey completed by school counselors.

Table 3 includes questions related to the method of assessment school districts or schools use to evaluate the school guidance services. The primary question asked “does your school district or school assess and or evaluate your school's guidance services using seven established measures contained in the Quality Standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools?” (SACS, 2004). Table 3, measure 1 “overall counseling appraisal”, 58% of principals indicated that this method was used; while 76% of counselors indicated that this method was used. For measures 2 and 3, “ensures that each student has access to an adult advisor, mentor, or counselor”, and “provides student services in the areas of health and safety”, neither principals nor counselors

Table 4. Principal/School Counselor Comparison of Relationship of the School Counseling Program to the SBDM.

	N		Mean*		p	Significant/ Non-Significant
	Principals	Counselors	Principals	Counselors		
How would you evaluate the relationship that exists between your site based council and your counseling program?	68	68	2.75	2.58	0.15	ns

*Means calculated using a 4 point Likert scale: 1= not helpful; 2 = somewhat helpful; 3 = helpful; and 4 = very helpful.

Table 5. Principal/School Counselor Comparison of Beliefs Concerning Importance of the School Counseling Program.

	N		Mean*		p	Significant/ Non-Significant
	Principals	Counselors	Principals	Counselors		
Assess the importance of your counseling program to the school in terms of its contribution to meeting the school's mission.	68	67	3.47	3.49	0.47	ns

* Means calculated using a 4 point Likert scale: 1 = not important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = important and 4 = very important.

indicated that these measures were used. For measures four, “provides appropriate support for students with special needs”, 98% of principals and 88% of counselors indicated this measure was used. For measure five, “facilitates student assistance from other agencies”, 100% of principals and 91% of counselors indicated this measure was used. For measure six, “maintains confidentiality of records”, 100% of principals and 97% of counselors indicated this measure was used to evaluate their counseling program. For measure seven, “provides educational opportunities to help parents and teachers understand the various stages of development”, zero percent of principals and 66% of counselors stated this measure was used for evaluation.

Table 4 presents the results of a t-test comparing principals and counselors beliefs about the relationship that exists between the site based council and the counseling program. Mean scores represent the outcome of principals and counselors selection on a 4 point Likert scale: 1 = not helpful; 2 = somewhat helpful; 3 = helpful; and 4 = very helpful. The mean score for principals was 2.75 and for counselors were 2.58. The p value for this comparison was .15 indicating no significant difference between principals and counselors at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 5 presents the results of a t-test comparing principal and counselor beliefs about the importance of the counseling program to the school's mission. Mean scores represent the outcome of principals and counselors selections on a 4-point Likert scale: 1 = not important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = important; and 4 = very important. The mean score for principals was 3.47 and for counselors were 3.49. The p value for this comparison was .46 indicating no significant difference between principals and counselors at the $p < .05$ level.

FINDINGS

The typical principal respondent in this survey is male, has 7.5 years of experience, and is more likely to be an elementary principal. In the study's randomly stratified sample by school organizational pattern, the typical counselor is female, has 8.1 years of experience, and due to this sampling method served in an elementary setting. From the research, there was disagreement as to the existence of SBDM counseling sub-committees in the schools. Principals were almost two times as likely as counselors to indicate that their school had a SBDM sub-committee. In Table 3, the researchers focused on the Quality Standards for Counseling Programs as espoused by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). In measure one, counselors, more so than principals, believed that their programs are appraised and evaluated using the overall counseling procedures as outlined in Standard 7 of the SACS accreditation instrument. There were no positive responses to measures two or three which dealt with each student having access to mentors, advisors, and/or counselors, or access to health services information as outlined by SACS. In measures four through six, while principals and counselors believed that their schools were being evaluated on their ability to provide support for special needs students, facilitating student assistance from other agencies, and maintaining confidentiality of records, principals believed that these quality standards were being used more often than the counselors. There was substantial disagreement between principals and counselors on the use of measure seven in evaluating the program's ability to provide information on human growth and development to parents, and teachers. Principals believed that measure seven was not used to evaluate the program, while two-thirds of counselors believed it was an evaluation tool

used to assess their program. In Table 4, principals generally believed at a slightly higher level that the relationship was more helpful than counselors, although there was no significant difference ($p=0.05$) in the responses to the question, "How would you evaluate the relationship that exists between your site based council and your counseling program". In Table 5, principals and counselors believed that the counseling program was very important to accomplishing the school's mission, although there was no significant difference ($p=0.05$) in the responses to the question, "Assess the importance of your counseling program to the school in terms of its contribution to meeting the schools mission?"

When considering the data related to the SACS criteria (Table 3), principals generally believed to a greater degree that counseling programs were being evaluated on their ability to provide for appropriate supports for special needs students, assistance from other agencies, and maintaining confidentiality. Tables 4 and 5 indicated principals and counselors both believe that the relationship between SBDMs and school counseling programs is helpful, and that the counseling program is very important to meeting the schools mission (SACS, 2004).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature review in the study, as well as the results of the study reported here, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

1. principals should augment the formation of counseling sub-committees within all SBDMs, as chair of those councils;
2. principals should assume the responsibility for integrating the school counselor into a specified and clear role adequately using his/her training (Murray, 1995);
3. counselors need to illuminate their job responsibility to principal in providing parents and teachers with information related to human growth and development;
4. school leaders should elevate the role of the counseling program by minimizing non-counseling functions;
5. counselors should advocate for their programs by providing school leaders with information concerning counseling contacts, and services to students in the areas of health and safety;
6. district leadership should provide for joint administrator/counselor professional development with emphasis on clarifying roles;
7. district leadership should strengthen the working relationships between educational leaders, school counselors, and local decision-making bodies; and
8. educational leaders must know and value the contributions of employees, such as counselors, in developing and maintaining a productive school culture and climate.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited by the small size of the sample ($n=138$). A second limitation is the small size of the principal sample due to the limitation of the participants being drawn from southeastern Kentucky and the requisite requirement to conduct a stratified random sample of the 625 counselor returns in order to match more closely the principal and counselor data. In addition, the sample was taken exclusively from Kentucky. Finally, Kentucky has a unique local decision-making governance model that may limit transference or application of results and recommendations.

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Principal Selection Processes: Best Practice for Superintendents

Thomas A. Kersten

Ask superintendents of schools what they consider one of their most important decisions and you are likely to hear the selection of their principals. In fact, common wisdom among central office administrators and faculty, as well as parents and school board members, is that the success of the school is directly linked to the effectiveness of the building level administrator. These perceptions are supported by a significant body of research which shows that effective principals are the single most important determiners of educational climate in the school and the central figures in the school improvement process (Caldwell & Lutz, 1978; Connors, 2000; Edmonds, 1981; Green, 2001; Schmoker, 2001; Murphy, 2002; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Because of their perceived impact, principals often find themselves under great pressure from internal and external sources not only to improve teaching but also student achievement. In fact, the linkage between effective school leadership and increased student achievement has been well documented and permeates national and local level discussions about school leadership and improvement (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Heller, 2004; Stigler, 1999). Not surprisingly, today more than ever principals are expected to be knowledgeable, articulate leaders who through shared leadership can move their school communities toward significant educational improvement and ultimately student achievement gains (Kersten & Israel, 2005). With such high expectations, is it any wonder that superintendents place such a high priority on principal selection?

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The principals' employment market is an important consideration for school districts. With sufficient well qualified candidates, school districts enhance their chances of hiring a high performing principal while a shortage of candidates may force them to compete for principals from a small pool of top candidates and possibly settle for a less qualified principal. Therefore, as school districts prepare to initiate a principal search process, they will need to consider the employment outlook for principals.

For principal candidates, the news is very good. The current employment market for principals is one of the strongest in the past 30 years and is projected to remain so for several more. Employment projections from the U. S. Department of Labor indicate opportunities in educational administration will exceed the average of other occupations through 2012 (U. S. Department of Labor, 2004). Contributing to this positive job market is a projected student enrollment growth between 5 to 7 percent over the next 10 years (U. S. Department of Labor, 2004). As the population of school administrators continues to age, administrator retirements are projected to create additional opportunities for candidates. In Illinois, for example, the State Board of Education (ISBE) reports that school districts will employ approximately 2,700 new administrators through 2008 (Ruiz & Dunn, 2005). In its listing of non-instructional public school shortage areas, the ISBE ranks middle school and high school principals and assistant principals in the top five (Ruiz & Dunn, 2005). Another study reports that over a third of all Illinois middle school principals indicated that they intend to retire by 2009 (Mulhall, Flowers, & Bertens, 2004). On a broader level, the educational policy makers and state legislators believe that finding can-

didates to fill administrative vacancies will remain a problem through the rest of the decade (Mulhall, Flowers, & Bertens, 2004).

The principal employment market also has implications for professors of educational administration who design principal preparation programs and prepare school leaders. Recently, researchers such as Levine (2005) have questioned the efficacy of administrator preparation programs and challenged professors of educational administration to re-think their educational administration degree programs to better prepare tomorrow's school leaders. In response to Levine, a joint research task force under the sponsorship of the University Council for Educational Administration, American Educational Research Association (AERA), and National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) has studied the 2005 Levine Report and prepared its own action plan designed to research ten separate educational leadership related domains, one of which is the recruitment, selection and development of leadership candidates (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005). Such national-level research foci only highlight the importance of strong, effective school-based leadership and principal selection.

PROBLEMS AND PURPOSES

As the principal's role expands, performance expectations grow, and principal openings increase, the need to identify high performing principals who are equipped to meet the demands and challenges of public school administration becomes more and more critical. In fact, the risks associated with the selection of an unsuccessful principal are so high that school superintendents and boards of education must make principal selection a top priority. A poor hiring decision will not only impact the professional career of the selected candidate but will likely affect the culture the school as well as the operation of the school district. Consequently, the importance of selecting a principal who is a good fit for the position and has the knowledge and skills required to be a successful leader is of utmost importance.

A thorough understanding of the principal selection process will increase the likelihood of employing a highly competent school leader who possesses the knowledge and skills required to be successful in the 21st century. Consequently, this study was designed to provide valuable insights through the eyes of Illinois public school superintendents on the latest practices in principal selection which may be useful for both employers and principal candidates. This study seeks to answer the following questions: What recruitment strategies do Illinois superintendents employ in their principal selection processes? What candidate application materials are required? What groups typically participate in the interview process and are their roles advisory or decision-making? What components do school districts employ in their principal selection processes? Who ultimately makes the hiring decision?

In addition to understanding the selection process components, both superintendents and principal candidates would benefit from the wisdom of practicing superintendents who have observed both successful and unsuccessful candidates. Therefore, this study also seeks to investigate the following questions: What do superintendents perceive as the qualities of a successful candidate? What do candidates do which hinder their chances for selection?

Finally, as principal candidates prepare for the interview process, advice on how they can best prepare and present themselves would be beneficial. As a result, this study seeks to identify the following: What advice do superintendents have for principal candidates to help them enhance their chances for selection?

The Research Study

Context

Illinois is a diverse state composed of 875 school districts configured as K–8 elementary, 9–12 high school, or K–12 unit districts serving approximately 2,062,912 students within 110 counties. Similar to several other Midwest states, Illinois is characterized by a mix of many small rural communities primarily in the central, south, and western portions of the state and by a blend of urban and suburban communities in the densely populated and diverse Chicago metropolitan area. According to the Illinois 2004–2005 State Report Card, 2,062,912 children include 56.7% Black, 26.3% Hispanic, 18.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2% Native American and 0.07%

Multi Racial/Ethnic. Of these children, 40% are from low-income families, and 6.6% come from homes where a native language other than English is spoken (ISBE, 2005).

This study, conducted during May and June, 2005, surveyed 300 Illinois school superintendents who were randomly assigned to the research sample from all Illinois public school districts including Chicago (McMillan & Wergin, 2006). A state-wide versus local study was chosen to provide broader and richer information which could prove useful to Illinois superintendents and principal candidates as well as possibly administrators from other states.

Participants

Funding limitations required that a sample of 300 Illinois superintendents rather than all superintendents be sent a survey. Of the 300 surveys mailed, 128 were completed which represented a 42.7% response rate. Surveys were returned from 50 elementary (K–8), 20 high school (9–12), and 58 unit (K–12) superintendents. Of these, 61 were suburban, 59 rural, and 8 urban. These superintendents averaged 8.23 years of superintendent experience with a range of 1–33 years. The median experience level of superintendents in the sample was 5 years.

Questionnaire

An 18-item, self-administered questionnaire was developed and tested with a focus group of school administrators who were not included in the final study. After refining the questionnaire and procedures, the instrument was approved by the Roosevelt University Internal Review Board (IRB). The questionnaire was mailed to the 300 superintendents in the sample. Part I of the questionnaire asked participants to supply demographic data including their position, type of district, and district enrollment.

Part II asked superintendents to rate their perceptions of the principal candidate market 1 through 5, with 1 no basis for judgment, 2 strongly disagree, 3 disagree, 4 agree, and 5 as strongly agree. Items included the size of the current candidate pool, the strength of the candidates and projections of both the future candidate pool and its strength.

Part III consisted of four separate items. Superintendents were asked to identify recruitment strategies, required application materials, selection process participants, and interview process components. For each group which participated in the selection process, superintendents were asked to indicate whether the group's participation was advisory or decision-making.

In Part IV, which consisted of four open-ended items, superintendents described what they believed to be the qualities of successful principal candidate as well as what candidates do to hinder their chances for selection. In addition, superintendents were asked to provide one question they would include in an interview as well as offer advice to principal candidates.

Data Collection

A modified Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method and Flower's (2002) Survey Research Method were used to collect study data. A cover letter, questionnaire, and addressed stamped envelop were mailed to each participant. In addition, both the email address and phone number of the researcher were provided in the event that clarification was needed.

Data Analysis

The survey data were entered into Microsoft Excel 2002 edition for analysis. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe closed-ended survey responses. Data were analyzed to identify any trends that might appear within the categories (Maxwell, 1996). Through inductive analysis (McMillan & Wergin, 2006) "data are gathered first and synthesized inductively for understanding. Conclusions are grounded from the bottom up" (p. 94). Unique differences among the types of school districts are described in the results section.

Open-ended qualitative responses were recorded for each item. Through data reduction, display, conclusion creation, and triangulation, data were verified and trends identified (Berkowitz, 1997). These data were ana-

lyzed by the researcher and two independent practicing administrators who were not part of the study. Each independently performed data reduction, display, and triangulation to create conclusions. Only after each independently completed their analysis, did they share their data-generated themes with each other. The results detailed in this paper reflect this process. While this does not guarantee reliability and validity, it does provide “dependable results” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 146.) which can be replicated and retested to increase reliability and validity (Merriam, 1988).

Finally, not all data proved relevant. Superintendents’ perceptions of the size of the principal market, strength of candidate pool, projections of the size and strength of the future candidate pool, and questions they would likely ask during an interview were not included in the results since specific themes did not naturally emerge from the data.

RESULTS

Principal Recruitment Strategies

Superintendents reported that they still rely on traditional university job placement notification services; however, web-based recruitment is nearly as prevalent (see Figure 1). Services offered by professional organizations such as the Illinois Association of School Administrators or the Illinois Principals Association as well as Illinois State Regional Offices of Education are also regularly used. Job notices in local newspapers were employed primarily in urban and rural communities while administrative networking was a strategy used in at least a quarter of the school districts. National publications such as *Education Week* or the employment of personnel search firms played a minimal role in most Illinois school districts as only 2% of unit and 6% of elementary district superintendents indicated that they employ them. However, 20% of high school district superintendents identified private search firms as a recruitment option.

Required Application Materials

A high percentage of school districts still require administrative candidates to submit resumes, cover letters, and credentials or letters of reference (see Figure 2). Although nearly half of the superintendents said that candidates must complete a paper application, another 36.2% now have online applications. However, only 14% of rural and 25% of urban districts utilized online application while 59% of suburban districts required them. Similarly, personal candidate statements are routinely found in half of the suburban and urban searches, but only expected by 22% of rural school districts. Paper-based and digital portfolios were required by less than 10% of school districts.

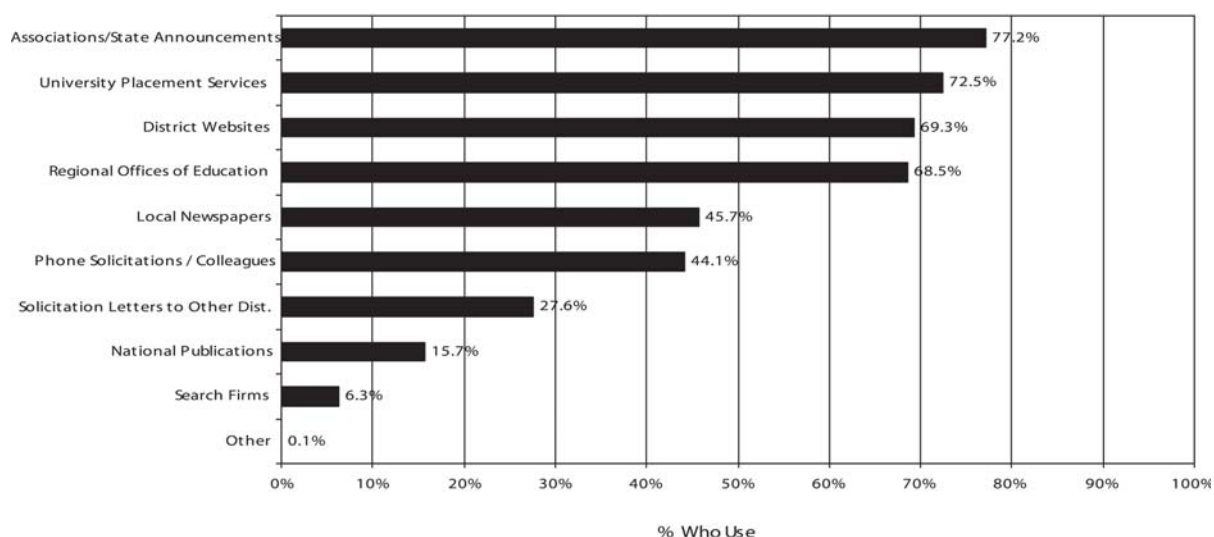


Figure 1. Principal Recruitment Strategies.

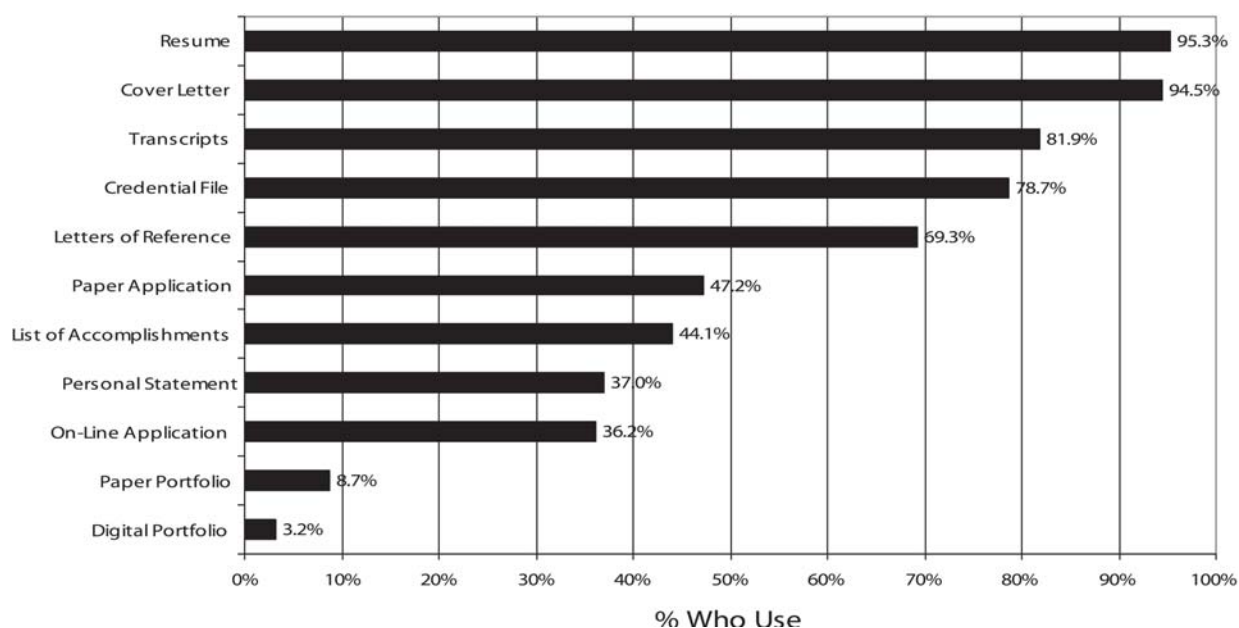


Figure 2. Application Materials.

Interview Process Participation

In addition to the superintendent, a number of other stakeholders regularly participate in principal interviews. Figure 3 details the range of participation. Candidates can expect to interview with multiple groups representing a variety of stakeholders. Leading the participant list are other district administrators; however, board of education members interview principals in 84% of the districts. Interestingly, administrative team interviews were most common in high school district searches (75%) while they were used less often in elementary (58%) and unit district (53%). Candidates can also expect to interview regularly with faculty members, parents, and community representatives. At the high school level, candidates should be prepared in some instances to be interviewed by students.

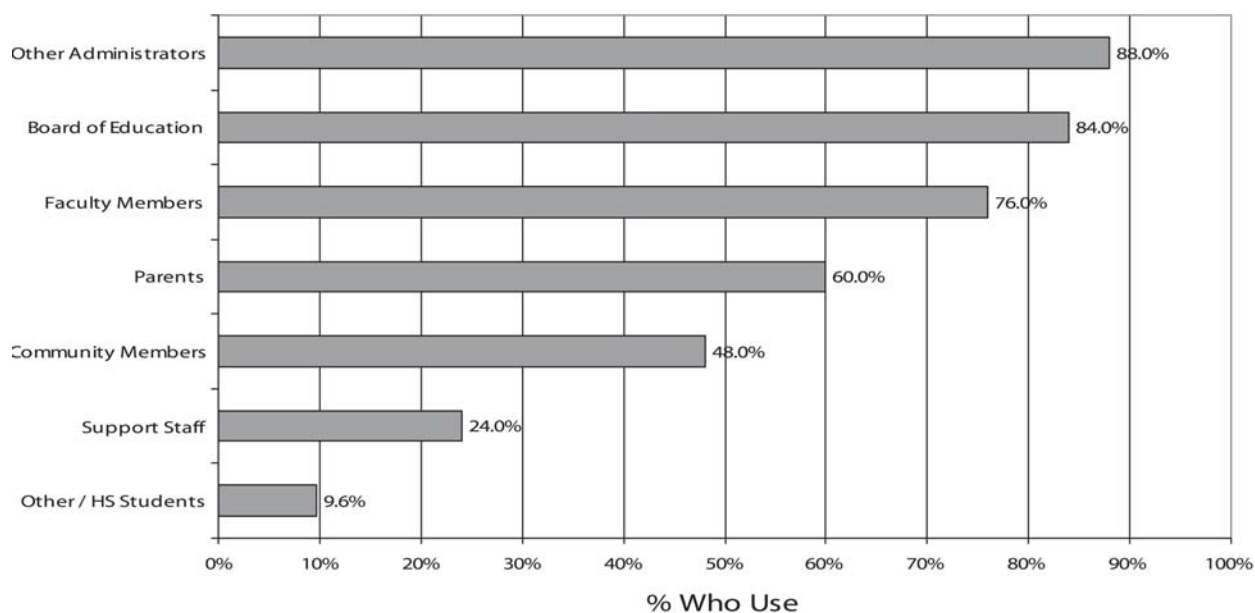


Figure 3. Interview Process Participation.

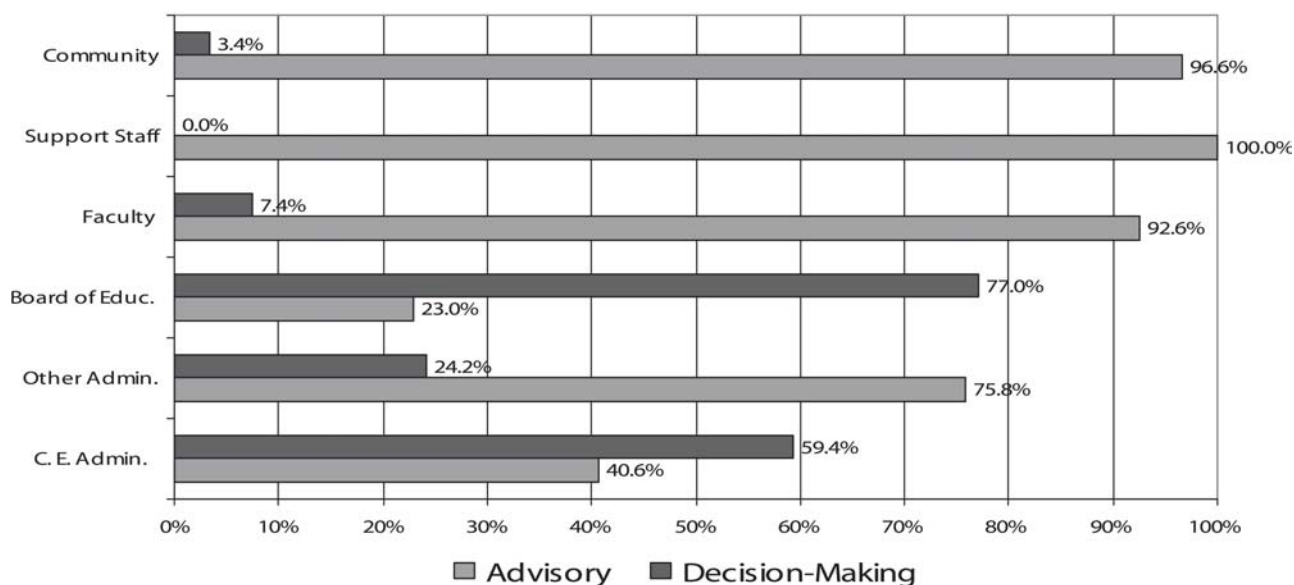


Figure 4. Participation Role: Advisory or Decision-Making.

Participation Role: Advisory or Decision-Making

Although it is common to involve many different groups in principal interviews, a key question is whether their role is merely advisory or whether they have some direct input in the selection. Figure 4 shows that beside the administrative staff, only the board of education generally has an active decision-making role. Other groups are asked to provide their perspectives, but the actual decision-making process is reserved for the administration and board.

Another interesting study finding related to who actually makes the final hiring decision (see Figure 5). Although more superintendents are responsible, the final decision-makers differ significantly depending upon geographic location. In suburban and urban districts, the superintendent is usually the decision-maker while in rural school districts the board of education selects the principal in over 40% of the searches.

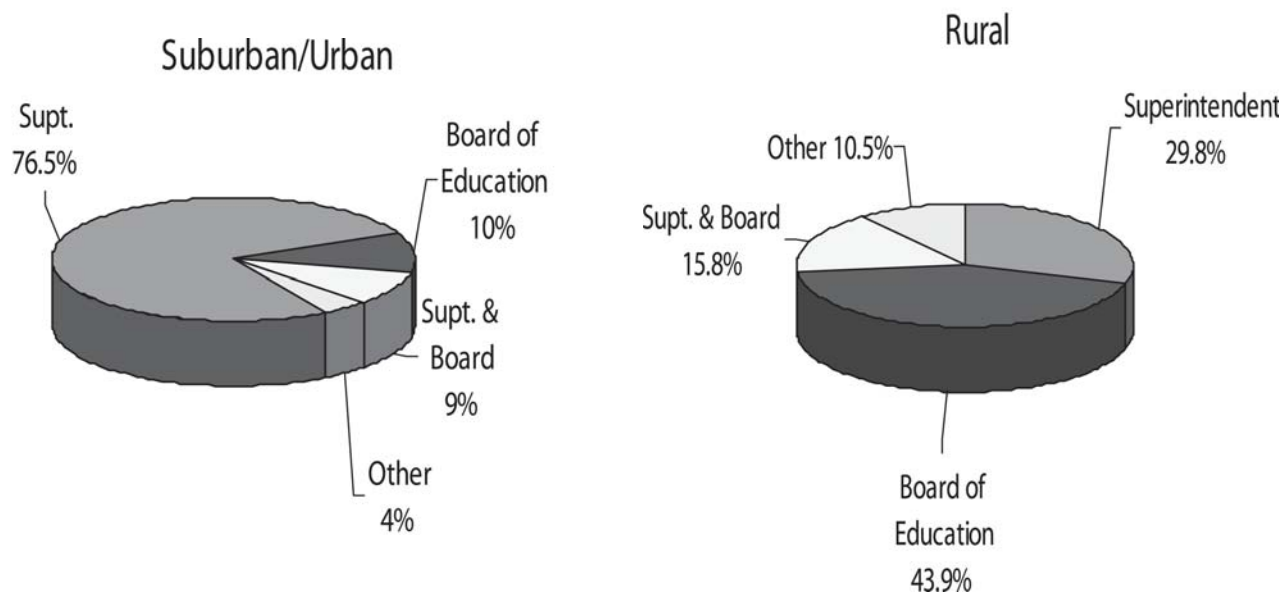


Figure 5.

Open-Ended Responses

In Part IV of the study, superintendents were asked to draw upon their experience to respond to several open-ended questions. Since almost all superintendents provided multiple responses, data are reported as a percentage of overall responses for each question. The higher the percentage; the more often it was mentioned by respondents.

Qualities of Successful Candidates

The most frequently identified quality of a successful candidate was strong interpersonal skills which comprised 14.9% of the total responses. Superintendents noted that the most successful candidates were described as approachable, friendly, caring, confident individuals with a sense of humor who were as even tempered as they were socially adept. These candidates exercised mature, good judgment in both the preparation of their application materials and throughout all phases of the selection process. In essence, they demonstrated the skills necessary to work effectively with multiple stakeholders.

Also mentioned frequently was the importance of candidates presenting themselves as up-to-date and knowledgeable in the field (14.2%). Superintendents reported that most successful candidates had an excellent grasp of curriculum and instruction and could readily discuss the latest research, trends, and best practices in the field. They truly understood the teaching and learning processes and were adept at explaining how to use data to drive decision-making. In addition, successful candidates could describe how they mobilized resources to support student learning and were also knowledgeable about technology. Interestingly, these same candidates understood adult learning, had led professional development efforts and could articulate a personal plan for their own professional development.

In addition to a well grounded educational foundation, those who were most successful presented themselves as educational leaders (10.6%). Superintendents reported that a track record of success in some administrative capacity, particularly related to empowering others in a collaborative environment, was important. Candidates who were perceived as proactive rather than reactive, able to “wear many hats,” and were judged by interviewers as able to earn the respect of staff and community members did well. The strongest candidates were solid decision-makers who understood how to motivate subordinates yet were unafraid to hold others accountable for the success of children and school improvement efforts.

Candidates who demonstrated strong communication skills (7.8%) improved the chances for selection. Their written application materials were meticulous prepared and they demonstrated adept verbal skills characterized by articulate, focused responses throughout the process. Good listening skills were highlighted as another plus.

Superintendents indicated that candidates with a record of successful teaching and administrative or quasi-administrative experiences such as a coordinator position or principal of a summer school program were more attractive (6.0%). These individuals could draw upon their successful experiences to enhance their candidacies, particularly if this included work with diverse populations.

Finally, five other qualities emerged. Aspiring principals who presented themselves as ethical (5.5%), showed energy and enthusiasm for the position (4.8%), could articulate a vision for the school (4.6%), presented themselves as having solid organizational and management skills (4.9%), and had a strong work ethic (3.9%) also enhanced their candidacies.

Hindrances to Success

While some candidates helped their chances, others hindered their selection in a variety of ways. Superintendents reported that poor written and verbal communication skills were the most common reason that candidates were unsuccessful (26.5%). For some who were not even invited to interview, the quality of their application materials was a deciding factor. Those that contained poor spelling and grammatical errors or were too wordy and difficult to follow were often rejected.

For candidates who passed to the interview stage, verbal skills proved crucial. Superintendents identified several specific verbal behaviors which hinder selection including:

- Excessive talking rather than answering succinctly;
- Providing weak, generalized, superficial responses;
- Failing to listen carefully and not responding directly to questions asked; and,
- Answering tentatively.

The second most frequently mentioned hindrance was their inability to focus on the collaborative nature of school leadership (22.8%). Superintendents reported that the most common mistake in their area was speaking egotistically and coming across as self-centered. These candidates tended to emphasize “I” versus “we” and focused their comments primarily on themselves. They tended to brag about their skills and accomplishments and, in general, be “know it all” individuals. Instead of sharing successes with others, they readily took personal credit. Finally, these candidates were often unable or unwilling to admit past mistakes which raised doubts rather than solidified their position.

In addition to weak personal skills, poor judgment was an identified problem area (13.9%). Examples of common mistakes were:

- Failing to discuss the importance of students’ needs or even mention children during interviews;
- Trying too hard to impress;
- Using political pressure and/or politicking even with school board members to influence their hiring;
- Failing to personalize their interest in the position;
- Showing a lack of willingness to perform some duties;
- Projecting minimal interest in community involvement;
- Initiating job demands;
- Talking too much about irrelevant experiences such as coaching;
- Promising too little or too much if selected;
- Arriving late for the interview; and,
- Asking prematurely about salary and benefits.

Beside the inability to work effectively with multiple stakeholders and a lack of personal skills, superintendents said that not being current and knowledgeable in the field was a detriment (11.0%). Candidates who were unable to articulate a vision for school improvement or could not discuss in-depth such topics as data driven decision-making, curriculum mapping, No Child Left Behind, and the standards movement were less attractive.

Another hindrance was a lack of pre-interview preparation which placed them at a disadvantage when interviewing (8.3%). Superintendents noted that candidates who failed to research the district, school, community, and/or position were generally unprepared to discuss their qualifications and skills particularly as they related to a certain position or the unique culture of the school and district. As a result, they often stumbled when responding to specific interview questions. In some instances, because of a lack of research, candidates applied for positions for which they were not qualified.

Finally, poor preparation also extended to the completion of application materials. Candidates who had sloppy paperwork, poor resumes and cover letters, as well as who failed to provide all required application documents or contact information were eliminated early.

Advice to Candidates

Because superintendents of schools are so integral to the selection process, they are in the unique position to offer advice to those who seek the principalship. As such, superintendents were asked to identify specific advice they would provide candidates to improve their chances for selection. Superintendents suggested that aspiring principals:

- Seek out as much administrative or quasi-administrative experience as possible before applying including discussing their aspirations with their school and district administrators and asking for additional administrative responsibilities to hone their skills and build their resumes;
- Build their professional knowledge base to ensure that they are up-to-date in the field;

Seek out opportunities to create a personal network of teachers, administrators, and colleagues which can be invaluable in helping to establish professional connections needed to be selected for an interview;

Research the school district and specific position as much as possible prior to applying;

Prepare questions to ask of various stakeholders during the interview process. Questions which draw out the positive aspects of the school and district as well as provide candidates with the information they need are most effective;

Prepare meticulous application documents;

Dress and groom professionally;

Show respect for everyone from the phone receptionist to the superintendent;

Be personable and genuine throughout the selection process;

Project enthusiasm and self-confidence;

Respond to interview questions articulately, succinctly, and directly;

Provide honest responses particularly when explaining difficult issues or situations; and,

Make children a priority during interviews and visits to the school or district office.

LIMITATIONS

This research survey was distributed to a random sample of Illinois superintendents of schools. Even though the response rate was high, generalizations are limited to Illinois. Only through replication of this study in other states or the nation as a whole may transfer of findings be possible. Qualitative responses may be inconsistent and therefore limiting. However, through continual feedback and data triangulation, attempts were made to minimize respondent discrepancies. (Denzin, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994.) Caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from the data.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to understand Illinois superintendent perceptions' concerning best practices in principal selection. Superintendents, principal candidates, and professors of educational administration may find the results particularly useful since the principal employment market is projected to remain tight for employers for at least a few years. To recruit and employ a high performing principal will require a thorough understanding of both the principal marketplace and best practices in educational administration employment.

The study data support the literature on the complex and critical nature of the principalship, particularly related to effective leadership, school climate, and increased student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Murphy, 2002; Heller, 2004). In light of the Levine (2005) report, this research also provides data which may be particularly useful to professors of educational administration as they prepare principals with the personal skills and professional preparation necessary to lead highly complex organization toward school improvement in the 21st century. University professors must not only prepare their graduates to be thoroughly informed on the latest research and best practices in educational leadership, but they must also build into their preparation programs specific opportunities for students to link their course work with practical, meaningful school-based experiences, (Levine, 2005).

Simultaneously, superintendents need to be proactive recruiters who understand how to develop and execute a comprehensive search process to identify a strong candidate pool. With the expanding sophistication of the recruitment and selection processes, great care is required to ensure that the selected principal is a good fit for both the position and the district since a poor match would be detrimental to both the school district and the candidate. Consequently, both principal candidates and superintendents as they prepare for all phases of the complex principal hiring process would benefit from understanding the best practices identified through the study: recruitment, required application materials, interview participants including nature of their roles; and, interview process components.

The wisdom offered by school superintendents can provide vital insights into the qualities of successful and unsuccessful candidates which can be useful to aspiring administrators who hope to maximize their chances for

selection. With a thorough understanding of all aspects of the employment process as well as advice from superintendents, principal candidates can prepare and position themselves for success.

Professors of educational administration also play an important role in the development of skilled school leaders. As professors design and deliver their administrative preparation programs, they must graduate school-level leaders who understand the latest research and best practices in the education, can think mindfully about how to foster collaborative shared leadership, and understand how to employ data driven decision-making for school improvement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In addition, professors may want to consider the inclusion of more substantial clinical experiences, possibly even full-time internship requirements, to link administrative preparation programs more closely to actual school settings, (Levine, 2005).

Finally, the principal candidates can improve their chances for selection if they understanding each component of the selection process including how school districts recruit candidates, what application materials are typically required, the nature and scope of interview processes, and other possible selection process components including reference checking and site visits. In addition, the insights of Illinois superintendents about successful and unsuccessful candidates as well as superintendents' advice for aspiring administrators can provide valuable information which candidates can use to navigate successfully through the complex and often times demanding principal selection process.

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Best Practice about Bullying: What Counselors and Teachers Know and What Principals Should Know

Rebecca A. Robles-Piña, Dianne Reed and Barbara Polnick

Several groups have called for principals to take action against bullying in schools. For example, the Catholic News Service/U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (2004) was quoted as saying “School principals are called key to stopping bullies” (p. 1). At the National Catholic Educational Association, Deborah A. Schwoppe, an assistant principal, stated that principals must take a stand to stop bullying by devoting time for day-to-day, hands-on activities, not just signing up for a pre-packaged program. Moreover, an empirical study assessing principals’ knowledge about bullying reaffirmed the role in reducing bullying and promoting a safe school climate (Hathorn, 2004). Additionally, a report by law-enforcement leaders, researchers, university persons, and the U.S. Department of Justice have called the principal’s role pivotal in stopping bullies (Cavanagh, 2004). To make this happen, principals need assistance in making informed decisions about bullying behaviors. Collecting base-line data about bullying perceptions within an ecological perspective that includes the involvement of all school personnel is essential in preventing bullying (Dake, Price, & Telljohan, 2003). The purpose of this study was to survey educators about their perceptions about bullying and to share these best practices with principals about how to take a stand against bullying.

HISTORY OF BULLYING

In the last two decades, behaviors historically considered “rites of passage” and “having a bit of fun” have emerged as threats to school safety, which affect the psychological and physical health of children (Stockdale, Hangadumanbo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002). Initial research related to bullying actually started in the Scandinavian countries and later become a research interest in the U.S. The rise in interest has been, in part, due to recent concerns over school violence. One of the most notable cases of school violence was one in which two young male students shot several other students at Columbine High School. These young men expressed to others that they were angry because they felt ostracized from the popular group. One of the students, Klebold, expressed in his journal that he felt like an outcast and that everyone was against him (Lindsey, 2000).

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) reported that one common characteristic among youth who had resorted to shooting violence was that 71% had been targets of bullying. When bullying is left unmanaged, then bullies as well as victims can experience a variety of emotional, social, behavioral, and academic difficulties (Moffit, Caspi, Dickson, Silva, & Stanton, 1996). Some research states that bullying behavior not only affects the overall climate of the schools (Limber & Small, 2003), but that it also poses serious risks for victims and bullies (Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan & Scheidt, 2003). Moreover, being the victim of aggression from peers can have psychological consequences, such as depression and low self-esteem (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001).

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PREVALENCE OF BULLYING AND VICTIMIZATION

The prevalence of bullying is difficult to assess due to a lack of consistency in the definition. Since the original research on bullying originated in Scandinavian countries, it is difficult to assess if bullying is defined in the same manner in U. S. studies. The definition most commonly used comes from the seminal work conducted by Olweus, who stated, "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (Olweus, 1994, p. 97). From a developmental perspective, the highest rates of bullying and victimization occur in elementary schools and decline in the higher grades (Pellegrini & Long, 2002). In U. S. elementary schools, the percentage of reported victimization is reported to be 19% (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 2001). A U. S. study (Pellegrini et al., 2001) determined that 14% of students in elementary grades report being victims of bullying. In middle schools the prevalence of victimization (grades 6-8) is lower than in elementary schools.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Bullying and victimization can occur in a variety of locations. Stockdale et al., (2002) found in their study that bullying is prevalent in rural and urban elementary schools alike. A study comparing three rural school (Dulmus, Theriot, Sower, & Blackburn, 2004), however, has indicated that the prevalence of bullying is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. In relation to specific locations within schools, bullying is most likely to occur in unstructured school settings, such as the playground or lunchroom (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000; Leff, Power, Costigan, & Manz, 2003).

The research on school performance characteristics (such as academic achievement) of students, who were victims of bullying, has provided inconsistent findings. In some studies correlations were found between low academic achievement and students who were victims and/or students who were victims of bullying. A study in Britain found a significant inverse relationship of -0.41 between a student's report of victimization and academic achievement, as well as a significant weak negative relationship (-0.27) between bullying and academic achievement (Mynard & Joseph, 1997). A similar study involving a sample of children in the U. S. also found that both victims and bullies experienced lower academic performance (Mynard & Joseph, 1997). Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates' study (2000) discovered that both bullies and victims reported lower academic achievement while Juvonen, Nishina and Graham (2000) found similar findings when investigating academic achievement in a sample of middle school students who had been victimized. Conversely, Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton and Scheidt (2001) found no significant relationship between academic achievement and status as a victim or bully/victim, but did find a significant relationship for bullies who were found to be more likely to have academic problems.

Individual Characteristics

The literature regarding physical characteristics of victims, bullies, and victims/bullies has been examined and found to be conflicting. Most of the studies were conducted in the late '70s and current studies are needed. Physical characteristics found to be related to being victimized in these studies included the size of the students, who were typically smaller and weaker in comparison to their peers (Olweus, 1978). Other researchers have found no significant differences between students who had been victimized and those who had not been victimized when size was considered; however, Lowenstein did find that victims were less attractive, had odd mannerisms, and/or physical disabilities (Lowenstein, 1978).

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER AND RACE

When gender has been studied in relation to bullying in children and adolescents, the literature has been categorized as *direct* versus *indirect* bullying behaviors. Boys have been found to be involved in more direct bullying, such as physical aggression, than girls (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Berthold & Hoover, 2000; Natvig, Atbrektsen, Qvarnstrom, 2001; Olweus, 1994; Siann, Callahan, Glissov, Loekhart, & Rawson, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Some studies indicated that both boys and girls are likely to engage in direct verbal bullying

(Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995). The literature described indirect bullying as social exclusion and subject of rumors, and few gender differences exist (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Nansel, et al., 2001; Olweus, 1994; Peterson & Rigby, 1999; Siann, et al., 1994). The research indicated that several gender differences did exist in regard to who bullies whom. Typically, boys are bullied by boys, but not by girls, and girls are bullied by both sexes (Whitney & Smith, 1993). [f1]

Research studies investigating racial or ethnic groups in regards to bullying and victimization are varied and conflicting. Earlier studies in the United Kingdom (Siann, et al. 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993) found no significant differences for racial or ethnic groups. A most recent study from England and Germany (Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schultz, 2001), however, did find a significant relationship between ethnicity and bullying with minorities more likely to be the victims of bullying. Three studies conducted in the U. S. have produced differing results. A national study (Nansel et. al., 2001) and a state study (Hanish & Guerra, 2000) investigating bullying and victimization behaviors between American, Hispanic, and White children found no significant differences. However, in a study in California, where White students were in the minority, there was a greater likelihood that White students were victimized and African American students more likely to be the bullies (Graham & Juvonen, 2002).

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The role of socioeconomic status in relation to victimization and bullying has been studied and also has yielded different results. Sourander, Helstela, Helenius, and Piha, (2000) found in their study that socioeconomic status, parental level of education, and whether a child came from an intact, divorced, or remarried family were not significantly related to bullying or victimization. Conversely, in another study, a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and bullying and victimization behavior was found (Wolke et al., 2001). Children from lower socioeconomic status in this study were more likely to bully others and to be the victims of bullying.

The research investigating whether or not “loners” were more likely to be bullied is related to whether the study was one of causation or relationship. Some research indicated that there was a positive relationship between loneliness and victimization (Forero, McLellan, Rissel, & Bauman, 1999; Juvonen et al., 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Nansel et al., 2001) and negatively related to self-esteem (Juvonen et al.). Those studies that have reported causation have described peer victimization as a cause of children’s loneliness (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996) and lower self-esteem (Forero et al., 1999). The interaction of victimization, loneliness and self-esteem was reported as due to a “poor self-concept that may play a central role in a vicious cycle that perpetuates and solidifies a child’s status as a victim of peer abuse” (Egan & Perry, 1998, p. 299).

EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTIONS

In response to problems with bullying in schools, most schools are lacking in measuring the effectiveness of interventions (Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003). Of the existing programs, very little is known about their effectiveness (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

The existing interventions can be categorized as: (a) prepackaged programs, (b) zero tolerance policy, (c) conflict resolution to all students and classroom management to teachers, and (d) modification of the school climate (Orpinas, Horne & Staniszewski, 2003). Examples of prepackaged programs include: (a) *First Steps to Success* (Walker, Kavanagh, Stiller, Golly, Severson, & Feil (1998); *Bully Busters: A Teacher’s Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders* (Newman, Horne, & Bartolomucci, 2002); *Bully-Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools* (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli, 1997). Mytton, DiGuseppi, Gough, Taylor, and Logan (2002) found that, overall, these programs have had only modest outcomes.

Strategies to reduce aggression by teaching conflict resolution have had some moderate success. For example, an evaluation of the *Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program* (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaudry, & Samples, 1998) indicated that this program did manage to decrease the amount of aggression in classes where implemented, especially in classes where the lessons were taught on a frequent basis. Currently, the zero tolerance

policy, a strategy designed to reduce and eliminate school violence by severely punishing offenses, indicated that there was no evidence that the program improved school safety (Skiba, 2000).

Orpinas, et al., (2003) indicated that the best interventions are based not on specific interventions or a consultative model, but on a collaborative model. This type of model should include school personnel, university consultants, modification of the school environment, education of students, and training of teachers. Additionally, there is a need to survey the school climate, address character education, and introduce bullying prevention in programs, as well.

TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING BULLYING

Including an ecological perspective means surveying all educators about their perceptions of bullying and victimization. While teachers are most likely to respond to the immediate act of bullying and victimization, counselors are more likely to respond to bullying and victimization after the occurrence and to provide interventions to prevent future occurrences. Principals, similar to counselors, are also likely to address bullying behavior after the occurrence, but unlike counselors, their intervention is likely to be more in the form of a disciplinary action.

Bullying is a major problem, yet only limited research has addressed teachers' roles in bullying dynamics. Extant studies have reported that teachers are likely to: (a) report lower prevalence rates of bullying than do students (Stockdale et al., 2002,) (b) not always correctly identify bullies (Leff, Kupersmidt, Patterson, & Power, 1999), and (c) not feel confident in their abilities to deal with bullying (Boulton, 1997). Teachers might not only be unaware of the extent to which bullying occurs in their schools, but might be unwilling to intervene should they recognize instances of bullying. In the identification of bullying behavior, Leff et al., (1999) found that teachers could more accurately identify bullies and victims in elementary schools than they could middle school students.

In terms of physical versus verbal acts of violence, Eslea's (1998) study revealed that teachers perceived physical acts as bullying maybe (as revealed in Borg's [1998] study) because physical acts of bullying were more distressing to the victim. When considering teachers' perceptions of who bullies whom, teachers were more likely to perceive girl on boy acts of bullying as more serious than boy on girl acts. Moreover, teachers were more likely to take some sort of action, such as punishment, when bullying included a physical act.

If bullying is to stop, then proper identification of bullying and appropriate interventions need to be put into place. Teachers play a central role in reducing bullying. If teachers recognize the severity of bullying and encourage children to report more, then it is more likely to be reduced (Eslea, 1998).

Several studies have been conducted regarding principals' perceptions about bullying. In 2000, Sprague, Smith, and Stieber examined principals' perceptions in Oregon and found that while principals believed that schools were relatively safe from acts that are considered violent, acts such as bullying, harassment, and cruel teasing remained grave concerns. A study of Texas principals' knowledge of bullying found that while principals' level of knowledge was high, they were not aware of the level of bullying on their campus and were not aware of locations where bullying occurred (Hathorn, 2004). Like teachers, principals underestimated the amount of bullying that occurred and were reluctant to get involved (Viadero, 1997). A most recent national randomized study (Dake, 2004) surveying principals' perceptions indicated that no school-based bullying prevention activities were being conducted in one out of five schools. Additionally, the study found that if principals had received training about bullying either from a graduate training program or continuing education, that training made a favorable difference in principals' handling of bullies.

The purpose of this study was to assess counselors' and teachers' perceptions about bullying and interventions used against bullying to determine best practices to disseminate to principals in developing sound school-based bullying programs. The literature review assisted in formulating the following research questions: (1) What are the perceptions of counselors and teachers regarding different aspects of bullying, such as: (a) the location, frequency, and intensity; (b) physical versus verbal; (c) victim characteristics; and (d) relationship between physical characteristics, gender, socioeconomic, and ethnicity variables and bullying? (2) Is there a difference in perceptions of counselors and teachers regarding different aspects of bullying, such as: (a) the location, frequency, and intensity; (b) physical versus verbal; (c) victim characteristics; and (d) relationship between physical characteristics, gender, socioeconomic, and ethnicity variables and bullying? (3a) Is there a

significant difference between counselors' and teachers' use of interventions? (3b) What are the top three bullying interventions used by teachers and counselors?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The teachers and counselors surveyed were from a large metropolitan area. Table 1 provides the demographics of the participants. In summary, the following observations were made. In regards to professional position, there were more counselors than teachers surveyed. One respondent indicated professional training as a social worker, but worked as a counselor; thus, the response was treated as a counselor response. Five respondents did not respond; thus, 47 teachers and 65 counselors responded for a total 112 respondents. The majority of the school counselors had from 6–10 years school experience, and the majority of teachers had from 1–5 and 11–15 years experience. In regards to populations served, the counselors were represented equally in elementary and secondary settings, while the majority of teachers worked in elementary settings. The majority of counselors and teachers reported experiences being bullied and the majority of the bullying reported occurred in elementary school. The majority of counselors and teachers were female and in the 31–49 years age range, with the majority of counselors being African American and the majority of teachers being White.

Procedures

The authors contacted directors of counseling programs and administrators of a large metropolitan school district to find out when professional development workshops were scheduled so that surveys could be administered. Ostensibly, all professionals in schools must attend the regularly scheduled workshops, and thus the workshop was designated as a setting where representation of the district would most likely be found. Permission was requested and granted to survey the participants at each workshop. Participants were informed of their rights to participate or decline participation without retribution. Moreover, they were informed that the data collected would be handled confidentially and that only aggregate data would be used in order to minimize identification of particular individuals or schools.

Instrument

The authors of this study developed the survey used to collect the data (see Appendix A). The following demographic information was requested: current position, gender, age range, ethnicity, years of school experience, population served, and personal experience with bullying along with where the bullying occurred.

Forty questions were developed and responses were requested on a Likert-scale ranging from “1 = Strongly Agree”, “2 = Agree”, “3 = Unsure”, “4 = Disagree”, and “5 = Strongly Disagree”. Two open-ended questions requested information about two anti-bullying prevention or intervention strategies that worked for the respondent and two anti-bullying prevention or intervention strategies that had not worked.

Procedures for Psychometric Properties

Evidence of reliability and validity were provided. Content validity was established in two ways: (a) linking questions to empirical studies in the literature review and (b) conducting a pilot study. The following themes emerged from the literature review and were used for the development of questions: (a) prevalence of bullying and victimization, (b) school and individual characteristics, (c) characteristics of gender and race, (d) social and psychological characteristics, (e) interventions, and (f) perceptions of teachers, counselors, and principals.

After receiving the completed surveys, the following categories emerged that matched the existing themes in the literature. Following are the categories and the questions comprising the categories: (a) location of bullying behaviors (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6); (b) frequency and intensity of bullying behaviors (Questions 7, 9, 10, 34, 37[f3]); (c) interventions used by school/individual (Questions 11, 12, 12, 14, 21, 23, 24, 25, 36); (d) physical versus verbal bullying behaviors (Questions 15, 18, 30, 37); (e) victim characteristics (Questions 22, 31, 35); (f)

Table 1. Professional/Bullying Experience/Demographic Characteristics of Counselors and Teachers (N = 117).

Characteristics		
Current Position		
Teacher	47 (40%)	
Counselor	64 (55%)	
Social Worker	1 (01%)	
Did Not Answer	5 (04%)	
	Counselors & Social Workers	Teachers
Range of School Experience		
1–5 years	3 (05%)	12 (26%)
6–10 years	21 (31%)	8 (17%)
11–15 years	15 (22%)	12 (26%)
16–20 years	4 (06%)	7 (15%)
21–25 years	11 (16%)	2 (04%)
25+ years	10 (15%)	5 (11%)
Did not answer	3 (05%)	1 (02%)
Population Served		
Elementary	26 (39%)	39 (83%)
Secondary	26 (39%)	0 (00%)
Both	10 (15%)	7 (15%)
Other	5 (08%)	0 (00%)
Did not answer	0 (00%)	1 (02%)
History of being bullied		
Yes	48 (72%)	26 (55%)
No	17 (25%)	20 (43%)
Did not answer	2 (03%)	1 (02%)
Gender		
Male	7 (10%)	0 (00%)
Female	38 (57%)	36 (77%)
Did not answer	22 (33%)	11 (24%)
Age Range		
20–30 years	7 (10%)	8 (17%)
31–39 years	21 (31%)	14 (30%)
40–49 years	21 (31%)	14 (30%)
50–59 years	15 (22%)	8 (17%)
60+ years	1 (02%)	3 (06%)
Did not answer	2 (03%)	0 (00%)
Ethnicity		
Asian American	1 (02%)	0 (00%)
African American	35 (52%)	3 (06%)
Hispanic	6 (09%)	0 (00%)
White	22 (33%)	41 (87%)
African American & Hispanic	1 (02%)	0 (00%)
Did not answer	2 (03%)	3 (06%)

Note. Due to rounding, some columns add up to less than or more than 100.

interaction of ethnicity victims bullying (Questions 8, 16, 19, 20, 27, 38, 40); and (g) interactions of physical aspects, gender, socioeconomic status, and bullying (Questions 17, 24, 26, 28, 32, 33, 39).

A pilot test of the instrument was conducted by submitting the survey to six master's level students in a graduate program who were employed as school counselors and teachers. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final survey used. Evidence of reliability was provided. To assess the reliability of the scores for this group of participants, a Cronbach's alpha was used and the coefficient found was .78.

RESULTS

The results were analyzed by research questions.

Question 1

What are the perceptions of counselors and teachers regarding different aspects of bullying, such as: (a) the location, frequency, and intensity; (b) physical versus verbal; (c) victim characteristics; and (d) relationship between physical characteristics, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity variables and bullying? See Table 2 for means and standard deviations for the total group responses. The majority of counselors and teachers responded that they "agreed" that: (a) the location of occurrence of bullying behaviors was in unstructured settings, such as halls; (b) frequency and intensity of bullying was increasing in their schools; (c) it was important that schools and individuals use interventions to prevent bullying, (d) physical bullying behaviors received more attention than verbal bullying, and (e) in relation to victims, that bullies had been victims of past bullying and that observers of bullying were negatively affected. Counselors and teachers were "unsure" about whether ethnicity, physical aspects, gender, or socioeconomic status variables played a part in student status as victim or bully.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Composite Variables (N=114).

SACS Measure	Total		Teacher		Counselor	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Location of bullying behaviors ^a	2.09	0.77	2.25	0.79	1.97	0.73*
Frequency & Intensity of bullying behaviors ^b	2.82	0.48	2.88	0.32	2.78	0.58
Interventions used by school/individual ^c	2.26	0.49	2.31	0.48	2.22	0.49
Physical vs. Verbal bullying behaviors ^d	2.35	0.58	2.60	0.56	2.18	0.53*
Victim characteristics ^e	2.59	0.50	2.61	0.45	2.58	0.54
Ethnicity X Victims X Bullying ^f	3.35	0.53	3.25	0.46	3.43	0.57
Physical Aspects, Gender, SES X Bullying ^g	3.17	0.58	3.22	0.56	3.13	0.6

a* .05

d* .00

^aIncludes questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

^bIncludes questions 7, 9, 10, 34, and 37.

^cIncludes questions 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 23, 24, 25, and 36.

^dIncludes questions 15, 18, 30, and 37.

^eIncludes questions 22, 31, and 35.

^fIncludes questions 8, 16, 19, 20, 27, 38, and 40.

^gIncludes questions 17, 24, 26, 28, 29, 32, 33, and 39.

Question 2

Is there a statistical difference in perceptions of counselors and teachers regarding different aspects of bullying, such as: (a) the location, frequency, and intensity; (b) physical versus verbal; (c) victim characteristics; and (d) relationship between physical characteristics, gender, socioeconomic, and ethnicity variables and bullying? See Table 2 for means, standard deviations, and statistical significance for each responding group. Statistical significance was found for only two questions. There was a statistical significance between perceptions of teachers ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 0.79$) and counselors ($M = 1.97$, $SD = .73$) on the location of bullying, $t(115) = 1.98$, $p = .05$. Moreover, there was a statistical significance between teachers ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.56$) and counselors ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.53$) on their perceptions of physical versus verbal bullying $t(115) = 4.09$, $p = .00$.

Question 3a

Is there a statistical significance between counselors and teachers use of interventions? What are the top two bullying interventions used by teachers and counselors? There was not a statistical significance between the perceptions of teachers ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.49$) and the perceptions of counselors ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.49$) on types of interventions used, $t(115) = .992$, $p = .32$.

Question 3b

This question was answered by listing all of the interventions that had “worked,” (See Table 3). While participants were asked to rate their top two interventions, the analysis included the top three. Counselors answered that the following three interventions worked for them: (a) mediation; (b) life-skills class, guidance; and, (c) videos/stories/books/web-sites. Teachers answered that the following three interventions worked for them: (a) life-skills class, guidance; (b) video, stories, books, web sites; and (c) mediation. *Mediation* was defined as interventions that allowed bully and victim to meet together before a mediator to discuss the problem. *Life-skills classes* and *guidance units* were defined as programs that developed social skills also known as character education. Videos, stories, books, web-sites were defined as media that would supplement other techniques.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to survey teachers’ and counselors’ knowledge about bullying to develop best practices to share with principals in developing a school-based bullying program. The results were analyzed

Table 3. Responses to the probe, “List two anti-bullying and/or intervention strategies that have worked for you.”

Response Category	Counselors		Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
Mediation	17	40%	11	32%
Life-skills class guidance	13	31%	17	50%
Videos, stories, books, web-sites	12	29%	14	41%
Peer mediation	10	24%	1	3%
Counseling the bully	6	14%	11	32%
Counseling the victim	2	5%	9	26%
Group counseling for victims or bullies	4	10%	1	3%
Using administrative support	3	7%	1	3%
Parent intervention	0	0%	6	18%
Moving or separating students	0	0%	1	3%

Note. Counselors responding to above question (N) = 42. Teachers responding (N) = 34.

within a framework that included (a) acknowledging limitations, (b) examining results of each question with previous research, and (c) presenting implications on principals' preparation for developing programs related to bullying behaviors.

Several limitations were noted. First, while an attempt was made to include all counselors and teachers in the district by surveying at professional development workshops, not all professionals were present at the workshops. Due to this disparity, generalizations to all teachers and counselors of this school district are limited. Second, No studies were found that considered counselors' perspectives on bullying and, thus, were not able to compare our findings to a similar professional group. Third, multiple variables typically explain behavior. One such variable noted in the literature was school climate. Data on this variable's interaction with bullying might have increased the understanding of bullying in schools. In sum, these findings need to be examined with a larger sample including all school personnel and inclusion of other salient research variables.

FINDINGS

Counselors and teachers agreed that the location of bullying was likely to occur in less supervised settings such as hallways, which concurred with recent studies (Craig et al., 2000; Leff, et al., 2003) that found bullying to occur most frequently on the playground and in lunchrooms. In this study, counselors (from both elementary and secondary schools) and teachers (from predominately elementary schools) agreed that there was an increase in bullying in their schools. This finding is inconsistent with a recent finding of prevalence of bullying in the U.S. (Pellegrini & Long, 2002) that suggested that bullying and victimization occur most frequently in elementary schools and decline in secondary schools. Implications for principals would be that monitoring of unsupervised locations in schools is a very necessary objective in developing a bully-free environment. Furthermore, according to this study, implications regarding the level bullying programs need to be implemented indicated that programs need to be in elementary, middle, and high school.

Both counselors and teachers agreed that schools as well as individuals should use interventions to treat and prevent bullying. This finding is consistent with a recent study (Orpinas, et al., 2003) that suggested the best interventions are those that involve collaboration between all school personnel on developing systematic interventions to treat and prevent bullying. The finding regarding physical versus verbal bullying indicated that both groups consider physical bullying more significant and that it is most likely to receive more attention, which concurs with studies that suggest that more teachers view physical acts as bullying (Eslea, 1998) and as distressing to the victims (Borg, 1998). The implications for this finding for principals are several. One, principals need to develop a bullying program that includes the ideas of all school personnel as well as the community. Second, methods of deescalating verbal bullying need to be addressed early on to avoid the possibility of it turning to physical bullying, which typically gets a response. Third, recognize that initial responses to bullying by school personnel are different but need to be systematically organized around a cohesive bullying program, such as with teachers that are involved in observing the direct act of bullying, counselors who intervene in the mediation stage, and principals who intervene at the disciplinary stage.

Counselors and teachers agreed that many bullies had been victims in the past and that both victims and observers were affected by bullying. These findings have implications for counselors, teachers, and principals and their ability to intervene with bullies and victims in order to assist them academically and psychologically. This is especially meaningful, in light of research findings on the relationship between academic achievement of bullies as well as victims (Mynard & Joseph, 1997) and loneliness and self-esteem of victims (Forero, et al., 1999; Juvonen, et al., 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Nansel, et al., 2001). As leaders of the schools, principals can use this information in organizing staff development. Principals could share data with their staffs and communities regarding bullies and victims in their schools and their academic performance, as well as self-esteem (as measured by surveys).

While there were counselors and teachers who responded "unsure" about the impact of social and psychological characteristics variables on bullying, there are a couple of explanations for this finding. One, suggested from recent studies, was teachers' lack of knowledge to identify, inability to rate prevalence, and lack of competence in dealing with bullying (Boulton, 1997; Leff, et al., 1999; Stockdale, et al., 2002). Two, examining the literature on gender, ethnicity, physical characteristics, and socioeconomic status and bullying could provide a second explanation.

There is extensive literature on the relationship between gender and bullying, with boys more involved than girls in direct bullying (Olweus, 1994, Berthold & Hoover, 2000) and few differences between boys and girls engaging in social exclusion and rumors (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1994; Peterson & Rigby, 1999; Siann et al., 1994). The literature on the relationships between ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and bullying is conflicting, and the literature on physical characteristics is outdated. The findings from this study and from previous studies have several implications for school principals in terms of implementing school bullying programs. One, it is important to disseminate knowledge about gender differences in bullying to all school personnel so that school personnel do not treat indirect bullying as merely a “girl” phenomenon. Two, focus groups need to be conducted with children with special needs and from different ethnic groups so that their perceptions about bullying are addressed in the development of the bullying program.

On the second research question, there was a significant difference in counselors’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding where bullying occurs and perceptions regarding physical versus verbal bullying. A couple of explanations are offered here. One, there is a paucity of literature on counselors’ perspectives on bullying, so it is difficult to compare. Second, there is an indication that counselors and teachers are actually observing the frequency and intensity of bullying differently. It could be that elementary teachers might be involved in the immediate act of bullying and counselors often see students after the bullying has occurred. This could result in totally different perspectives. These findings also have implications for bullying programs that are developed by school principals. If verbal bullying is ignored, and physical bullying reinforced with attention, then the wrong message is being sent. The implication for principals in developing a bullying program is to identify the roles of school personnel located in different areas of the school in terms of identifying, reporting, and providing interventions.

Mediation, life-skills class/guidance, and videos, stories, books, and web-sites, were acknowledged as the three most popular interventions by counselors and teachers. Successful interventions (Orpinas, et al., 2003) were categorized as: (a) pre-packaged programs, (b) zero tolerance policies, (c) conflict resolution to all students and classroom management to teachers, and (d) modification of the school climate. The findings of this study suggested that interventions are consistent with the categories of conflict resolution for all students and classroom management for teachers, along with modification of school climate. This finding on types of interventions has implications for programs developed by principals. One, deciding on whether to use a bullying program that is already developed, use of an existing bullying program with modifications for the particular school, or develop a program specific to the needs of the school are decisions principals must make regarding selection of programs. The literature indicated that programs developed with school personnel, university researchers, and community members are the most successful.

It is quite evident that a phenomenon that originated in Scandinavian countries classified as *bullying* has become a top priority in the U. S. Success in determining the effects of bullying, however, is particularly incumbent on the leaders of the schools—the principals.

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The Impact on Instructional Practice of Participating in a Book Study Group

Judith A. Zimmerman

In order to effect change in schools, many authors have called for a reform of professional development practices (DuFour, Eaker & DuFour, 2005; Fullan, 2002; Guskey, 2002; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). Moreover, there is a greater recognition today that quality professional development for teachers is a necessary ingredient for all students to achieve at high levels. Job-embedded and sustained professional development has been recommended as a best practice by both the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 2002) and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001). School leaders help embed professional development in the teaching practice by encouraging teachers to engage in inquiry-based collegial activity to improve their instruction (Killion, 1999; Sparks, 1999). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the impact on professional practices of educators who participated in a book study group about differentiating instruction.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overcoming Barriers to Quality Professional Development

For years the lament among educators has been that there is neither sufficient time nor money to support quality professional development. For example, principals in a study in one Midwestern state acknowledged that lack of time and money were the biggest inhibitors to providing effective professional development for their teachers (Zimmerman & May, 2003b). However, staff development experts have provided some examples of *low-cost* inquiry-based learning that include examining/critiquing student work, examining teacher work (e.g., lesson plans and other instructional materials), developing authentic assessments, and forming study groups (Killion, 1999; Sparks, 1999). Moreover, according to Schmoker (2005), the use of professional learning communities is “the best, least expensive, most professionally rewarding way to improve schools” (p. 137).

Supportive Culture for Professional Development

Unfortunately, the culture in some schools presents another barrier to providing effective staff development. According to Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004), “the pervasive individualism that exists in schools prevents the staff from coming together as colleagues with a common sense of purpose and a commitment to improve” (p. 9). Moreover, educators’ beliefs about professional learning—as an investment in students or as a waste of time—are at the heart of a school’s culture (Peterson, 1999). Accordingly, Lambert (1998) called on educators to view professional development, not as training, but as “opportunities to learn” through collaborative action research and study groups (p. 88).

Administrators' Roles in Professional Development

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's Standard 2 underscores the importance of principals promoting "the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program" (Hessel & Holloway, 2002, p. 49). Moreover, "the principal who *joins with* the faculty and students in learning activities is the one who changes the school culture into one that is hospitable to lifelong learning" (Barth, 2005, p. 121). School leaders set the tone by modeling continuous learning, conversing with teachers about curriculum, focusing on student success, providing opportunities for teachers to learn, and sharing decision-making (Barth, 2005; Fleming, 2004; Hord, 2004; Peterson, 1999). Indeed, the administrator is the key in cultivating a sense that everyone is both a teacher and a learner, which is the essence of professional learning communities (PLCs) (Fleming, 2004; Sparks, 2005).

Professional Learning Communities

Core principles of PLCs include embracing learning rather than teaching, collaborating to help all pupils and adults learn, and using data and focusing on results to foster continuous improvement (DuFour, 2005; DuFour, Eaker & DuFour, 2005; Hord, 2004). Teachers, working in teams, support one another as they examine and refine their instruction; a form of action research (DuFour, 2005; Hord, 2004; Schmoker, 2005; Sparks, 2005). Sparks (2005) notes "Well-implemented PLCs are a powerful means of seamlessly blending teaching and professional learning". Examples of activities that match the purposes of PLCs are action research, case discussions, critical friends groups, lesson study and study groups.

Book Study Groups

Book studies, a type of study groups, can be effective forms of professional development in which educators choose a book as the focus of their study in order to discuss issues related to a particular topic of interest (*Phi Delta Kappa*, 2006). Tomlinson and Allan (2000) observed that teacher study groups were a successful vehicle for understanding and implementing differentiated instruction, particularly when former study group participants provided leadership to subsequent groups.

Differentiated Instruction

The focus of this manuscript was the book study about *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach all learners, Grades 3–12* (2002) by Diane Heacox. According to Heacox (2002), "differentiated instruction enhances learning for all students by engaging them in activities that better respond to their particular learning needs, strengths, and preferences" (p. 1). Experts concur that differentiation, through a variety of student-centered learning opportunities and assessments, is an excellent strategy for adapting instruction to pupils' unique differences (Chapman & King, 2005; Heacox, 2002; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact on the instructional/professional practices of educators who participated in a book study group. The qualitative case-study method was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore a "case" in-depth in order to better understand the person or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). This case study is unique in that it describes the book study experience from multiple perspectives (Creswell). First, the primary subjects represented a purposive and convenience sample of one principal and three teachers, from different districts, who elected to participate in a book study about differentiation. Secondly, the author, a faculty member in educational administration, served in the dual roles of book study participant and observer/researcher (Reed-Dahaney, 1997). The author journaled on-going reflections about her experience, and also kept field notes about participants' discussions during the book study sessions. Approximately four months after the meetings concluded, each subject was interviewed to discuss the impact of the book study on instructional/professional practice. Additionally, the teachers' classrooms were observed, with field notes kept about

their instructional practices relative to the book study topic. Finally, two Educational Service Center (ESC) consultants, who led the book studies, were also interviewed about their perspectives of the facilitation, and their perceptions of the impact of this type of professional development.

RESULTS

Facilitating the Book Study

Karol and Sylvia, the educational service center consultants who led the book study, had been in their current positions for approximately eight years. From the researcher's viewpoint, the facilitators appeared to demonstrate best practices in differentiating staff development in that they approached the activities and discussions during the four sessions with an understanding of varying teacher proficiency in differentiated instruction (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). Consistent with Chapman and King's (2005) model, the consultants first gave participants an overview of the philosophy and benefits to learners of differentiation. When interviewed, Sylvia stated her belief that professional development should be "relevant; not the flavor of the month." Karol concurred that staff development should "connect to things teachers already do" and not be perceived as an "add-on." Hence, before the second meeting, they asked participants to identify their current practices that seemed to differentiate instruction (Chapman & King, 2005). One of the participants quipped at the second meeting, "it's nice to know that you don't have to start at square one . . . look at what you're doing and go from there, made me feel good."

Sylvia is also convinced that professional development should be "action-based," because teachers "learn by doing, seeing and reflecting." Therefore, at each session, the facilitators consistently encouraged participants to not only visualize, but also try using some differentiated activities in their classrooms and then provided them opportunities to engage in reflection, discussion and collaboration (Chapman & King, 2005; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). At one meeting, Rita, a participant, expressed the frustration that often accompanies teachers' attempts to learn new strategies, "I go to these things and then reality sets in. How do I set this up?" Karol explained during her interview that collaboration was quite useful in this case, because it "helped them see other ways . . . that they couldn't get past on their own [and] talk about what to do when they hit a wall." Although participants "need time to talk," Karol cautioned that "they need to walk away with action plans." Therefore, she and Sylvia agreed that book studies are "more effective when [participants] are given something to do [homework] just like kids."

Demonstrating appreciation for educators' differing abilities/interests, the consultants promoted implementation of differentiation at "varied levels of complexity" (Chapman & King, 2005). Hence, when Rita retorted at a meeting, "Sounds good, but when do I have time to put it together?" Sylvia responded, "you just start small, especially with things that need changes." Moreover, because Karol perceives that teachers learn "like kids, in a variety of ways," she reported that as a facilitator "she makes adjustments based on teachers' learning styles or preferences." The consultants also tried to integrate principles of adult learning (O'Shea, 2005) into the book study, by connecting new content and skills to the educators' abilities and experience; and by focusing on practical applications of the material. Sylvia observed in the interview that the book study "diminishes isolation" and "enlarge[s] teachers' bag of tricks." Moreover, Sylvia recalled that one book study participant had "stopped to tell me about how her kids liked the 'choice board'." During the interview, another participant reflected that "it's easy to talk in that relaxed setting," but "personally I would have liked a little more structure on how to go about that." Another concurred that she wished the facilitators had provided even more "actual models" of "how people have actually done those things."

Implementing Differentiated Instruction

From the researcher's perspective

Because I had worked with the ESC for several years as instructor of record for its staff development series, the consultants readily agreed for me to participate in the book study. When introducing ourselves at the first session, I shared with the other participants that I would be "wearing several hats." As a former building princi-

pal, I valued professional development and hoped to learn more about book studies as a form of collaborative learning. As a fellow teacher, I wondered whether differentiation was a strategy that would better serve *my* students' needs. Finally, as a researcher, I wanted to explore the impact on their professional practice of participating in a book study group.

Engaging in text-based discussions at each meeting, I found myself naturally gravitating to those passages in the book (Heacox, 2002) that described the principal's role in supporting the implementation of differentiated instruction. I also endeavored to find a link between the tenets of differentiation and my belief that effective classroom management begins with lessons/activities that engage students. At the second meeting, from my administrator's lens, I shared with the group that I was interested in Heacox's (2002) statement that "challenge does not mean simply more work" (p. 67). I stated that this workload issue should be addressed by educators *before* parents raised legitimate concerns about the fairness of differentiated assignments for students.

Donning my "teacher hat," I *also* had difficulty visualizing what differentiation would look like in classes that I taught. When asked to share how we learned about our students, although I mentioned a change styles survey that I used, I admitted that I had not employed the results to improve my teaching. After completing the "integration matrix" (Heacox, 2002), I learned to determine whether my assignments/activities not only met the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, but also addressed students' learning styles or forms of intelligence. I found that my lessons typically related to Gardner's verbal/linguistic and visual/spatial intelligences (Heacox). Finally, I discovered that the greatest task was designing lessons that were tiered by challenge, complexity, process and/or product (Heacox). Although I identified some activities that gave my students a choice of products based on *interests* (e.g., research paper topics), my assignments were inadequate in providing for varying student *abilities*. However, as a graduate level instructor, I asked myself, "apart from grouping students with different strengths for classroom activities, is it really fair to differentiate assignments by ability?"

From Carrie's Perspective

Carrie, a high school intervention specialist in a small rural district, has a master's degree and over 30 years of experience. Although no differentiated *activities* were taking place during the observation, the classroom climate seemed indicative of differentiation in that it was an "inviting, relaxed environment for learning" with the students engaged in playing a game to practice graph coordinates (Chapman & King, 2005, p. 24). Moreover, at the first book study session, Carrie shared that she used a learning survey each year to determine whether students were visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. She reported that not only did the results give her valuable data about her students' learning styles, but also the pupils really enjoyed learning about the "descriptions of different ways to learn."

According to Carrie, staff development is "a critical part of being an effective teacher. I'm always excited when I have something new I can use . . . It used to break my heart to see teachers who were doing the same things as 30 years ago." Carrie joined the book study group, because she was "searching for a better way to get the point across." Moreover, she used some ideas immediately; she liked to "pick and choose." During the observation, her interest in learning new strategies was also evident when another intervention teacher demonstrated a new computer program. Not only had Carrie shared differentiation ideas with her special education colleague, but she had also just designed a differentiated unit ("layered curriculum") about the industrial revolution with one of the history teachers in her building. According to Carrie, "the students will be required to make choices about what [projects] they would like to produce that show learning. There are three levels. Each level requires thinking at a higher level of Bloom's [Taxonomy]."

From Rita's Perspective

Rita, in her 25th year, is a high school Spanish teacher in a large town. In the interview, Rita credited her school district for being "really supportive" of professional development in the past, with unlimited professional days, until recent financial cutbacks became necessary. Rita quipped in the interview that she joined the book study, because she gets "bored in the classroom" teaching in the same ways, and is always looking for "what's available to help students." Although during the classroom visit no differentiated *activities* were observed, other features of a differentiated classroom were apparent including: students engaged in a variety of ac-

tivities in small groups, teacher addressed the students' social needs, and an inviting environment with colorful content aids/posters displayed (Chapman & King, 2005). Rita also explained that she would "like to do some 'mapping out' to make sure I'm hitting different areas [styles]."

Furthermore, at the first book study meeting, Rita recounted that when she typically gave her students a multiple-intelligences survey at the beginning of the year, many would say, "yea, that's me." Rita reported that she used the survey results to vary activities for the whole class, eventually addressing "most of the learning styles." Moreover, Rita found that when she occasionally allowed students to *choose* a "way to show what they've learned" (e.g. with a skit or song); particularly with less able students, "their whole attitude changed." However, she echoed the concern of many teachers struggling with trying to implement differentiated instruction, "How do I assign grades?"

From Liz's perspective

Liz, who teaches 5th and 6th grade reading and language arts in a very small rural school, is in her 23rd year. During the observation, Liz used a variety of instructional strategies, engaged students in small groups to problem-solve, presented students with flexible time for learning activities, and displayed acceptance of all pupils (Chapman & King, 2005). She noted that her principal not only encouraged teachers' professional development, but also *asked* them to attend certain workshops. Although it was clear from her participation that Liz already used some differentiation, she reported that she joined the book study "to be able to do a little better job at differentiating with my kids."

During the third session Liz shared another book that had helped her design some "tiered activities" using a choice model that looked like "tic-tac-toe." In the interview she also described a new tic-tac-toe that "deals with vocabulary and some comprehension" which she is developing for a book about the revolution. Liz expressed her concern that although she "got a lot of ideas out of" the book study, she probably had not changed her lessons as much as she could. "But I do have ideas in the back of my head and I guess my goal is this summer to maybe look through it a little bit more when I have more time."

Unfortunately, "I think that it's [the innovation] really important that first month you're back from that workshop...maybe it's human nature, but it kind of dies out after the first couple of weeks." Liz, however, does not want differentiation to be "that one month kind of thing and then it gets locked away in a closet somewhere." Therefore, because she really wants "to get better at this," she has registered for a two-day ESC workshop that features the book study author.

From Cathy's Perspective

After retiring as the high school principal, Cathy was re-employed as the elementary principal in the same small rural school district; serving two years in this position. During the interview Cathy stated that quality professional development is "two-tiered" when "you marry where [the teachers] and the building needs to go" [with] "what the staff believes is needed for them to grow." Cathy strongly expressed her belief that the "principal needs to be the instructional leader . . . It saddens me when people miss that mark." Moreover, Cathy not only encouraged her teachers to participate in book studies, but she also took part in two different groups herself, including the one about differentiating instruction. According to Tomlinson and Allan (2000), if principals want to support and coach teachers to greater uses of differentiation, they must develop their own understanding of the "vocabulary of differentiation, what differentiation looks like in the classroom, and the process by which teachers might develop their skills" (p. 81).

By hiring substitutes, Cathy obtained released time for her teachers to work with Karol, from the ESC, to expand their implementation of differentiation. Cathy related that as a result of *her* book study participation she now held teachers accountable in a "variety of ways" including "look[ing] for differentiation in lesson plans," and noting in their performance evaluations whether they practiced differentiated instruction. Additionally, Cathy mentioned that she used faculty meetings for staff development and tried to routinely eat lunch with her teachers in order to informally discuss educational issues.

Having also participated in book study about classroom assessment, Cathy gained some "information and insight" to plan with Karol how she could next help her teachers with new assessment strategies; a natural continu-

ation of their focus on differentiation. She speculated that “after they go through the assessment book study, they’ll take on a different picture” of the process and hopefully “work together on common assessments.” The aforementioned examples of Cathy’s instructional leadership appear consistent with Tomlinson and McTighe’s (2006) recommendations of how supportive school administrators can help to embed differentiation in teachers’ practice.

DISCUSSION

Assessing Professional Development Activities

After each staff development seminar that it hosts, the educational service center always conducts an on-site assessment. Hence, when asked to rate the overall book study experience, survey results from 22 of the 31 book study participants, across three book study groups (71% response rate), returned a mean of 4.64 on a 5-point scale (5 = highest). The mostly frequently mentioned strengths of participating in the book studies were “working collaboratively” (11) and “gaining practical and relevant ideas” (11).

However, “for an innovation to become actively incorporated into the educator’s repertoire, participants must . . . work through . . . how this change will improve the quality of curriculum and instruction [and] modify the general proposal to the reality of the classroom” (Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline, 2004, p. 14). Consequently, a more thorough assessment of the effectiveness of any staff development program, such as this book study, would include long-term follow-up with teacher reflection *after* practicing the new strategies, and assessment of how well new practices were implemented (Guskey, 2002; NASSP, 2002). This research study attempted, in a small way, to furnish the aforementioned type of assessment. During an intense review of collected research data from all participants, color coding was employed in order to begin to organize and code the data (Creswell, 1998). Constant comparative analysis was then employed to develop cross-case or common themes (Creswell, 1998).

Common Themes

According to Creswell (1998), “Interpretation involves making sense of the data, the lessons learned” (p. 144). From the author’s perspective, the following common themes could apply to a discussion of the impact of any professional development, regardless of the topic or content.

Relevance

The ESC consultants used the term “relevance” to characterize quality professional development. Hence, they attempted within their book study facilitation to help teachers visualize “connections” between the content and what they were already doing in their classrooms. Karol did not want teachers to consider differentiated instruction to be “an add-on.” Accordingly, one of the teachers acknowledged that it was good not to feel like she had to go back to “square one” to implement differentiation. Carrie agreed that she felt like she could “pick and choose” those parts of the strategy that best fit her style. Cathy, too, talked about “marrying” what the teachers believed they needed with where she thought they should go. Liz, who had used some differentiation in the past, also acknowledged that the book study has “certainly made me more aware of what I need to do to . . . know these kids and their individual differences.” Consequently, both Sylvia and Karol tried to give the book study participants opportunities to “learn by doing” through some “homework” assignments to assure that the experience was “action-based” and not simply theoretical. This focus on relevance seemed to be a critical factor in whether or not the educators would even consider trying to add a new strategy to their repertoire.

Bag of Tricks

According to Rita, professional development should be “centered on how we can help the child—that’s why teachers are doing it anyway.” She reported that she attended many professional development sessions every year, because she wanted to learn new strategies, so that she wouldn’t “get bored” teaching in the same ways.

Carrie concurred that she got “excited” when she learned something new to help her “get the point across” with her students. Liz also attended “a lot” of staff development “to make me better at what I’m doing . . . improve my teaching.” Similarly, Sylvia, one of the facilitators, expressed her belief that the “whole idea” of professional development in differentiated instruction was to “enlarge teachers’ bag of tricks.” The author, too, was able to pull a strategy from this “bag” to plan lessons for her graduate students in the form of the aforementioned “integration matrix.” Thus, in varying degrees, each of the book study participants had begun to incorporate into their instruction something that they had learned.

Reality

Although Sylvia, one of the facilitators, cautioned participants to “start small,” the learning curve is still daunting when implementing any new strategy. Thus, Rita’s lament that “I go to these things and then *reality* sets in” is not atypical of what teachers face when expected to implement new strategies in their classrooms after only a few staff development sessions. Moreover, Rita and others mentioned a lack of time to design differentiated lessons. According to Rita, “you think you have it until you sit down to do it.” Consistent with this view is Liz’s observation that information teachers learn from workshops is often lost after the first few weeks and not “looked through” again until, “in all honesty, when I have a little more time.” Additionally, Carrie expressed her need for more “actual models” to help her to implement differentiation. Still other issues arise when educators attempt to adjust their teaching styles or even their mental models to incorporate new concepts, such as the author’s issue with fairness or Rita’s with assigning grades. Assuming most educators seek staff development to enlarge their “bag of tricks,” the realities of what they face in their classrooms on a day-to-day basis could certainly limit the impact of their learning.

Support

The term “support” appears to sum up the subjects’ beliefs about a critical aspect of whether staff development was effective in changing classroom practice. Rita retorted that “sometimes [as teachers] we think we’re out there by ourselves,” but “I’m confident that I can call the ESC folks—they’re working with people in teams in buildings.” Accordingly, Sylvia credited collaborative staff development, such as the book study, because it “diminishes isolation.” Moreover, she and her colleague, Karol, mentioned the importance of reflection and collaborative discussion in their groups. Thus, Karol added that educators offered one another suggestions when they “hit the wall.” Rita expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to “discuss what’s working or not working” with others. Similarly, Liz recounted that she appreciated engaging in lunch-time conversation about educational issues with her 5th/6th grade team members and had made “general comments” to them about the differentiated instruction book study “when I first came back from it.”

Both the author and the elementary principal viewed support for staff development through an administrative “lens.” Cathy stated that she should be an “instructional leader” who endeavored to support her teachers’ professional development (i.e. released time, staff meetings, ESC consultants). Particularly in Cathy’s building, book study as a form of job-embedded professional development was evident. She used her position power, as the building principal, to ensure that using differentiated instruction was an integral part of her expectations for teachers. Therefore, from the researcher’s viewpoint, the professional learning community that Cathy had developed with her teachers demonstrated the greatest potential for book study having an impact on educators’ instructional practices.

Potential Contributions of University Faculty

Universities, as well as educational service centers, can work interdependently with schools to help them be more successful (Sparks, 2005). Accordingly, a policy brief promulgated by the Ohio Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (OhioASCD) and the Staff Development Council of Ohio (SDCO) charged professors to promote staff development practices based on solid research findings; consistent with preparing aspirants to meet ISLLC Standard 2 (Hessel & Holloway, 2002; OhioASCD & SDCO, 2002). Moreover, preparation programs “must help to build bridges from theory to practice [by stressing] the importance of life-long

learning and the view of the principal as the leader of a learning community” (Zimmerman & May, 2003a, p. 307).

CONCLUSION

Limitations

A major limitation of this study was the small number of participants. Moreover, only one interview and observation was conducted for each participant teacher, with the other subjects interviewed only once as well. Because many teachers use the summer to create new lessons/units, a follow-up study in the fall might be indicated to better explore the impact of the book study. Additionally, a research study with more participants and additional data collection could only help to strengthen and verify this study’s findings.

Implications

Results of this research study should help not only the participants (teachers, principal, consultants, and professor) to reflect on their instructional/professional practices, but also assist other educational leaders who contemplate initiating book study groups. This author, acting both as a researcher and practitioner, will reflect upon the data to inform her own practice, including differentiating instruction in her graduate courses in educational administration. Moreover, for university faculty members, this study could underscore the importance of discussing job-embedded professional development with aspiring school leaders as a best practice, requiring their support, to improve instruction and ultimately student achievement in their schools. Book study could also be an important new strategy to employ in higher education in order to model the concept of professional learning communities (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). Moreover, regarding implementing any new strategy, including differentiation, it would behoove all service providers to “remember that change comes gradually” [and, accordingly they should] “differentiate their approaches to guide teachers” (Chapman & King, 2005, p. 25).

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No Child Left Behind: Implications as Viewed by Arkansas Superintendents and Patrons—A Brief Review of the Role of American Education over Time

Carleton R. Holt, Les Carnine and Marsha Jones

Education from the beginning has had major responsibility to the nation. Throughout history, the citizenry has valued the role of education, and public education has become the foundation for democracy. This review will take the reader through a quick look at the role and purpose of education over time and how it has changed.

Initially, public education was religious education as was pointed out in a Connecticut statute of 1650, which may be quoted as follows (Judd, 1918):

It being on chief project of the that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from a knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times, keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these times, by persuading them from the use of tongues, so that, at least, the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceiver; and that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers (the court decreed that whenever a township increased to fifty householders they should employ someone) to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read. (p. 23)

The American citizen has always asked these questions and has continued to look to public education for ways and means of rebuilding our national character and economic life. From the time of Thomas Jefferson, it has been the goal of our national leaders to reassert the acute dependence of free government and free society upon the organized system of education (Judd, 1918). Generally speaking, the people as a whole have accepted the doctrine that our schools are the most effective instruments we have for the conscious development of our national life. Is it then any wonder that today the national leadership is involved in trying to politically and ideologically guide the direction of American education?

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

Interestingly, as you review the historical reform of American education, definition of accountability centers on “what should be taught.” The inference was if schools would teach this course or add this to the syllabus then you will have solved almost all of what ails education. Critics were most often concerned about what wasn’t being taught rather than what was being accomplished. Few Americans recognize the massive list of requirements mandated of public education through the years and continuing to be added through these years of change.

As previously mentioned, the initial focus of teaching was reading, writing, and arithmetic skills and cultivating values that serve a democratic society. A plethora of courses have been added over time. In most states, we have not added a single minute to the school calendar in five decades! Yet, the current accountability push is to demand that students acquire universal proficiency in reading and mathematics (Volmer, 2003).

In stark and compelling language, the report described and decried the rising tide of mediocrity sweeping the nation’s schools. “A Nation at Risk” also discussed the intimate connection between the country’s educational system and its economy, as well as the intellectual, moral, and spiritual strengths of its people. The Commission

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on Excellence said quality of education and quality of life were inextricably linked, and both were in jeopardy. This becomes the watershed report that concluded that accountability and testing would be the elixir of what ails American education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Beginning in 2000, the national administration identified school reform efforts designed to improve student achievement as a high priority on its political agenda. In 2001, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) made sweeping changes in federal education policy, shifting comprehensive school programs to a mandate for improving achievement of all students. The reauthorization added two major components to the act: sustainability and accountability for improvement. This legislation is more commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). The federal accountability legislation sets the individual school as the major accountability focal point and creates a series of consequences for not making yearly progress toward universal proficiency in reading and mathematics for all students regardless of other special education, English-as-a-second-language, or poverty issues. This is the first time an American president has set a goal of universal proficiency in reading and mathematics for all children. The federal emphasis on literacy, reading, and mathematics emphasizes teacher and school accountability, with negative consequences when schools do not meet established improvement goals (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

IDEOLOGY vs. THE REAL WORLD

There appears to be a disconnect between the ideology of NCLB and the “real world” applications that are occurring within the rules and regulations of the law. Most observers would agree that the interest and the ideological intent of universal proficiency are quite laudable. In order to gain a perspective on the law currently held by educators across the state, educators in Arkansas were interviewed and surveyed about their perceptions of the NCLB law.

A survey was developed with the assistance of superintendents who are members of the Research and Advocacy Network. The survey (see Table 1) was sent to each district, and it was requested that they complete and return the survey. The researchers also conducted interviews with various superintendents and school administrators.

Table 1. NCLB Arkansas Survey, December 2003—School Superintendent and Interview Questions.

1. The federal gov. should be encouraged and lauded for a commitment to bring every child in the country to a meaningful level of proficiency in key academic areas?	Yes 17	No 3
2. Is your district on record and committed to using educational “best practices” to achieve universal proficiency?	Yes 18	No 2
3. In your opinion, what flaws in the NCLB legislation do not meet the test of educational “best practices”?	(See study for comments)	
4. What contradictions do you believe exist between what it purports to foster (universal proficiency) and the law requirements?	(See study for comments)	
5. If your district has had a low performance rating, how many children transferred to another school because of the designation?	4 districts responded 0, 2%, 3.2%, 0	
6. If yes, what is the estimated cost of transportation and administrative cost for processing?	One district estimated in excess of \$40,000.	
7. Choice has been around for several years. Are you aware of improved academic performance based on choice? We had one district mention “choice” and magnet schools. Several mentioned “choice” and charter schools but noted that improved performance had not been evident. One district thought choice would improve performance but did not cite any details for the answer.		

(continued)

Table 1 (continued). NCLB Arkansas Survey, December 2003—School Superintendent and Interview Questions.

8.	What district research or information do you have on the impact of NCLB on the (1) students, (2) teachers, (3) parents, (4) district level staff, and (5) community?	(Information regarding responses is enumerated in the study.)
9.	Has your district analyzed the probability of having campuses designated as low performing?	Yes 17 No 3
10.	We are assuming a yes to that question and how many campuses were going to be low performing because of small numbers in sub-group populations?	All, 8; Most, 5; Few, 2; None, 2; , No answer, 3
11.	Is your district assuming that unless universal proficiency is achieved by year twelve that the vast majority of your campuses will be low performing?	Yes 16 No 4
12.	As the law is currently written, is you district favorable to having comparisons made based on a different group of students each year, i.e. 4th grade?	Yes, 4; No, 15; No answer, 1
13.	Would you favor moving to a longitudinal approach that would track individual students through the grade levels with a required growth index for mobile and special education children?	Longitudinal approach, Yes 18, No 2 Growth index for mobile children, Yes 16, No 4 Special Education, Yes 11, No 4, No answer 6
14.	NCLB and IDEA both have ambitious agendas, and funding is a key factor in providing services especially for children of poverty, special education, etc. Since neither of the programs plus other allied programs were fully funded, do you think your district would be willing to support a resolution calling on congress and the president to suspend the accountability standards until such time that they would be willing to fully fund each of the key initiatives?	Yes 19 Not sure 1
15.	Did your district personnel or did you assist ADE in developing the State plan for compliance with NCLB?	Yes 3 No 17
16.	Has your district been the recipient of ADE technical assistance for creating strategies to be in compliance with NCLB?	Yes 2 No 18
17.	Are there other areas of NCLB/ACTAAP that need to be identified for modification?	Enumerated in the study.

The survey was based on the responses and interviews with 20 districts ranging in size from 25,000 to approximately 2000 in student population. Research and Advocacy Network has a membership of 37 districts and represents in excess of 50% of the State's student population.

A second survey has been completed at the authors' request by the Survey Research Center at the University of Arkansas to assess the perceived purpose and impact of NCLB on schools by conducting a statewide survey. The questions were selected by reviewing questions from the Arkansas, Harris and Gallup surveys. A field test was conducted of the questions and a sample size of 600 was selected that would give statistically a 4% error factor for analyzing the responses of Arkansas residents. The Research and Advocacy Network commissioned the survey and financial assistance was also provided by the College of Education and Health Professions and the Office of Education Policy at the University of Arkansas.

Table 2. Arkansas Statewide Survey NCLB (n=614).

Question	N	Percent
First, consider children and how they learn. Which do you believe?		
That—		
Children learn at the same rate	2	(1%)
Children learn at different rates	216	(99%) ^a
How much do you think each of the following potential reasons contributes to learning failures in the public schools in your community?		
Lack of home or parental support	552	(90%)
Lack of interest by students themselves	485	(79%)
Lack of discipline in schools	452	(74%)
Lack of good teaching	374	(61%)
Lack of community emphasis on academic education	168	(70%) ^b
Ultimately, who is legally responsible for providing public education?		
The federal government	111	(18%)
The state government	239	(39%)
The local school board	215	(35%)
Don't know	47	(8%)
Consider the following statement: Teacher pay raises should be connected to student performance.		
Strongly agree	87	(14%)
Agree	209	(34%)
Disagree	222	(36%)
Strongly disagree	88	(14%)
In the past year, Arkansas' legislature and governor have been involved in a legislative process to improve education in Arkansas. Do you think that their efforts will cause education achievement to:		
Improve dramatically	15	(2%)
Improve	228	(37%)
Neither improve nor decline	191	(31%)
Decline	104	(17%)
Decline dramatically	30	(5%)
Don't know	44	(7%)
In 2001, the federal government passed a law commonly called the "No Child Left Behind Act." Have you heard of the law?		
Yes	480	(78%)
No	133	(22%)
The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools to be rated. How familiar are you with the ratings of your local schools?		
Very familiar	70	(11%)
Familiar	164	(27%)
Neither familiar nor unfamiliar	65	(11%)
Unfamiliar	202	(33%)
Very unfamiliar	106	(17%)

(continued)

Table 2. Arkansas Statewide Survey NCLB (n=614).

Question	N	Percent
In your opinion, will a single test provide a fair picture of whether or not a school needs improvement?		
Yes, will provide a fair picture	148	(24%)
No, will not provide a fair picture	453	(74%)
In your opinion, what is the purpose of the “No Child Left Behind Act”?		
A genuine effort to improve public schools	242	(54%) ^c
An effort to gain support for the current political administration in Washington	158	(35%)
An effort to discredit the public schools	17	(4%)
An effort to increase competition between public and private schools	9	(2%)
Something else	22	(5%)
Don’t know	30	(5%)
Should students enrolled in special education be required to meet the same standards as all other students in a school?		
Yes	133	(22%)
No	457	(74%)
Consider the following: Standardized test results are a good measure of student academic performance. Would you:		
Strongly agree	66	(11%)
Agree	302	(49%)
Disagree	157	(26%)
Strongly disagree	70	(11%)
In your opinion, which is the better way to judge the job a school is doing?		
Whether students show reasonable improvement from where they started	490	(80%)
Whether students meet a fixed standard	94	(15%)
How much do you agree or disagree that: School ratings in newspapers and television affect your opinion of individual schools?		
Strongly agree	67	(11%)
Agree	230	(38%)
Disagree	243	(40%)
Strongly disagree	50	(8%)
Which would you prefer, to transfer your child to a school identified as NOT in need of improvement, or to have additional efforts made in your child’s present school?		
To transfer the child	76	(12%)
To have additional efforts made at present school	522	(85%)

^aPercent is calculated based on total 218 valid responses to this question.

^bPercent is calculated based on total 239 valid responses to this question.

^cPercent is calculated based on 449 responses to the question.

The questionnaire started with a question regarding the intent of NCLB and whether they agreed with the ideological intent of this new law. A survey of superintendents in the Research and Advocacy Network school districts indicated that 85% agreed with the ideological intent. Some of the superintendents did not question the intent but rather the practical reasonableness of universal proficiency. In a separate question, 90% of the superintendents indicated that their districts had a mission statement that communicated a goal of universal proficiency. The responders to the Arkansas statewide survey indicated that 78% of those answering had heard of

NCLB. The data of the Arkansas survey indicated that 54% the respondents who had heard of the law thought that it was a genuine effort to improve education. However, there were 35% of the respondents who thought it was political and another 11% who thought the law had other ideological meanings.

The law requires that schools utilize instructional strategies grounded in scientifically based research or best practices. The expanded non-regulatory guidance goes further to give examples of high-quality educational research. The law emphasizes that scientifically based research uses rigorous and systematic procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge about what works. A very complete definition of scientifically based research can be found in section 9101(37) of the reauthorized ESEA. After looking at the definition of best practices, the question arises as to how many practices actually meet the strict definition of the scientifically based research model? The law is very clear on this requirement. Researchers asked superintendents if their district had a similar commitment to best practices, and 90% indicated that they had a similar policy (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Superintendents were very supportive of the best practices approach. However, they note that the law was not consistent in following best practices when a school does not make the required achievement gains or adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two consecutive years. Readers should remember that a school may have increased achievement in all areas and sub-groups, but when the school does not meet all categories of targeted achievement, the school is still placed in school improvement. The district must offer students a choice of schools that are not in school improvement. Many superintendents and researchers wonder why “choice” does not have to meet the same rigorous requirements of scientifically based research as instructional strategies. The remedy of choice does not have a record of consistently improving achievement. Choice is not negative and has widespread support for magnet/charter schools, but it appears to be very inconsistent as a punishment and/or solution for parents seeking a higher quality school (Braswell, Kerr, and Miller, 2002).

Additional data from the survey of superintendents indicated that few parents transferred children from the schools in school improvement, and in all instances, it was less than 2%. One reason given by superintendents for the lack of transfer requests was that parents did not see a reason to transfer. Overall, the school may have made positive gains in achievement, and the arbitrary nature of the required level of achievement gains for special education students and other sub-groups did not appear to be of concern to parents. If their child liked the school, they did not see a reason to transfer from their neighborhood school. The data from the Arkansas statewide survey indicated that 85% of the respondents thought additional efforts/resources ought to be made or provided to the school rather than expending resources for choice.

Research has consistently noted that there is no marketplace in which consumers make choice on the basis of school quality. A study by Braswell, Kerr, and Miller (2002) of the University of Arkansas quoted three studies from Florida, Texas, and California that found no support for the position of market reformers stating parents exit public schools because of perceived low quality.

Superintendents also question mandatory restructuring of a school because of limited research showing that this will lead to significant achievement gains. Superintendents questioned the arbitrary aspect of mandatory achievement gains and firing or replacing personnel based on not meeting an exact target of achievement. Since the timeline for restructuring and school improvement has not necessitated restructuring in Arkansas, we could not cite any data concerning the experiences here in Arkansas. The surveying for this paper suggests the public was certainly negative about replacing and restructuring schools where improvement was happening. Researchers are questioning the restructuring, particularly when growth is taking place and schools have not been able to meet sub-population targets or the arbitrary growth requirement.

There has not been sufficient research done on school restructuring, and this could create serious legal questions. This may require additional money for potential legal challenges. Discussion of state responsibility for NCLB and legal challenges took place at the National Conference of State Legislators in July 2003 and was reported by Helen Gao in the *Los Angeles Times* (Gao, 2003).

Researchers asked superintendents about what the law purports to foster, (universal proficiency), verses the law’s requirements. Here are some of the comments that were received from the superintendents:

1. Conflicts with the law involved testing and holding special education students to the same standard as regular students. Superintendents mentioned that growth according to the child’s individual education plan was appropriate, but they questioned testing requirements of special education students. The Arkansas state-

wide survey data asked respondents about standards and special education students. Seventy-four percent of the respondents indicated they thought special education students should be held to a different standard.

2. Superintendents were unanimous in their criticism of using a single indicator (test) to determine proficiency and noted that research consistently has supported multiple measures (The Consortium for Renewing Education, 1998; Wiggins, 1993). The Arkansas statewide survey also indicated that the public was also skeptical of a single test being the basis of school ratings, as 74% of the respondents thought that a single test was not a fair evaluation.
3. The superintendents did not question the identification of sub-group populations but did question the relatively small size of a subgroup (25) and the fact that one or two students' performance could place a school in school improvement. Statistical research would conclude that for reliability and validity, a group size of 40–60 offers a better picture of student performance (Neill, 2003).
4. Interviews of Little Rock school administrators noted particularly that middle school students were difficult to motivate for the purposes of doing well on achievement tests, especially where there was no perceived benefit to the student. In fact, superintendents noted that without student/parent accountability in testing it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to motivate middle school and older students to take criterion and norm referenced testing seriously.
5. The Arkansas statewide survey indicated that the respondents thought that the two most important reasons children were not successful were the lack of parental support (90%) and lack of motivation by the individual student (79%). Discipline in schools (74%), lack of community interest in academic education (70%), and lack of good teaching (61%) were also cited, but did not have the almost universal rationale for failure accorded parental support and individual student motivation. The interviewers ask the responders to rank each issue, and it is noted that each of the issues continue in the same order by noting that lack of home or parental support is by far the most important with 65%, and lack of good teaching is noted by 29%.
6. Several superintendents mentioned that students learn at different rates and come to the school at various readiness levels. Superintendents questioned the arbitrary requirements that all students be at a certain point academically when we know there is a wide difference in learning rates, etc. They noted this as particularly true in schools with high poverty rates. The Arkansas statewide survey indicated that 99% of the respondents thought that children learned at different rates. Survey data also indicated that 80% of the respondents thought it much better to look at growth in student academic improvement rather than an arbitrary fixed standard to judge schools.
7. Several superintendents questioned the statistical practicality of 100% proficiency and whether the one time testing opportunity is a reasonable possibility for achieving 100% proficiency as defined by NCLB. The researchers noted that statewide survey data shows 74% of the respondents did not think a single test was a fair way to judge school performance.
8. Superintendents also noted the Arkansas Supreme Court had unanimously concurred that the state had been guilty of not providing adequate resources and those resources had not been equitably distributed. They also mentioned all of the unfunded mandates of the federal government—specifically special education—and questioned the labeling of schools when adequate resources had not been provided. Janet Hook notes in her recent article that the federal government authorized \$32 billion for 2004; yet, the administration had requested only \$22.6 billion, and Congress provided \$24.5 billion. It appears that the law is being seriously compromised without the funds to help schools meet the new education requirements (Hook, 2004). The Arkansas statewide survey indicated the respondents were very concerned about the recent special legislative session on education and the possible positive student academic achievement that may be forthcoming. It was noted that 31% did not think there would be any improvement, and interestingly, another 22% thought student achievement would actually decline.
9. Superintendents also expressed a suspicion Arkansas schools were under a distinct disadvantage because of cut scores required to be proficient, and much lower scores on similar standards are proficient in other states. A study by Northwest Evaluation Association points out the uneven playing field that many states are facing. Students scoring almost the same are not proficient in one state while proficient in another. The Southern Regional Education Board pointed out in 1996 the disparity between states on the gap that exists (D'Orio, 2003).

10. Superintendents noted that the Arkansas Department of Education had placed a number of schools on “alert” and “school improvement” list only to find that the schools were not deficient! At the time of this writing, 19% or 1 in 5 of the originally named schools had been removed from the list. Yet, they had been required to go through all of the remedial steps, even though they did not belong on the list. A number of reasons were given for the placing and removing the schools from the list of failing schools, but once named, the designation created some serious morale problems for those districts (Howell, 2004).
11. Superintendents were asked about the effect of NCLB on students, teachers, parents, and their community. Most of the commentary concerned teachers and the level of stress and frustration that were being felt by classroom teachers, especially at the grade levels where tests were being given. The Arkansas statewide survey data already indicated that the public (74%) does not think special education students should be held to the same standard. The respondents also disagreed (50%) with tying teacher pay raises to student performance. We did, however, note that (48%) agreed that some form of merit pay for student performance was a good idea.
12. Superintendents were unsure about the effect of NCLB on parents and community, but suspected the negative association of a school being designated for school improvement could produce a negative connotation of the public’s perception of the school. The survey indicated that 90% of the superintendents believe that, as NCLB continues all of their schools or almost all of their district campuses will be in school improvement. During interviews of other school superintendents, there was a suggestion that the intent was to weaken the historical trust in public education. On the Arkansas statewide survey, 50% of the responders noted that their opinion of a school is being shaped by the negative rating of a school. Obviously this is a troubling statistic given that 74% of those questioned thought that rating a school based on a single test was unfair. Equally troubling was the recent commentary of a U.S. Department of Education official suggesting that the punitive aspects of the law have been exaggerated (Dobbs, *Washington Post*, as reported in the *Morning News*, 2004).
13. Superintendents noted there would be test pressure on students particularly at the elementary school level. Poor test performance could lead to more grade retention, which has been exhaustively studied and found not to improve academic achievement. It does, however, lower self-esteem and increase the dropout rate. It was also cited earlier that the average older student is not motivated to take standardized testing seriously (Sheppard and Smith, 1989; Interviews with Little Rock School District Administrators, January 23, 2004).
14. As previously mentioned, 75% of the superintendents thought all or most of their campuses would be in school improvement. Ninety-five percent of the school districts have completed an analysis of their schools and the NCLB standards. A recent review by the Fair Test organization predicted that 70% of all campuses nationally would be in school improvement. Superintendents thought the comparison of different students each year, i.e. the 4th grade benchmark test, was also flawed. Ninety-five percent of the superintendents suggested that a longitudinal approach or tracking students would be much fairer and is more favorable in tracking growth. Ninety-five percent of the superintendents thought special education students ought to be judged on their individual growth (Fair Test Examiner, 2003).

Note: The school superintendents surveyed are from the larger school districts, and Research and Advocacy Network (RAN) membership is estimated to include 50% plus of the student population of the state. Several of the school districts have campuses in school improvement and most have at least one on alert status. The survey also requested information about the amount of technical assistance that has been provided school districts by the state Department of Education.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND LET’S FIX THE PROBLEMS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

The education of the child is a much broader undertaking than what some would have us believe. All of us know individuals who have triumphed against all odds (poverty, race, loss of parents, foster homes, etc.), but that is the exception rather than the rule. Health care, nutrition, drugs, insufficient parental support, housing, employment and the general environment are all part of the world of today’s child. Essentially

these factors can and do create significant impediments in learning rate of children. This is not an excuse but a recognition that not all children start from the same point educationally. We noted the public was certainly cognizant that children learn at different rates. Schools can assist in overcoming the effects of a negative environment, but the first order of business is to recognize the existence of these factors that impact life experiences and the instruction of a child. We must then work in concert with those who hope to address some of society's fundamental inequities to ensure a more level playing field for every child. Only then can we hope to achieve some semblance of universal proficiency.

If we continue down this path of a federal mandate for universal proficiency, we must attempt to find a common agreement on the depth and breadth of the curriculum that ought to be part of every child's education. We do have agreement on most of the basics, yet the state-by-state differences create different definitions of proficiency. The Vanderbilt 20/20 Vision study of 1998 underscores this issue and calls for general agreement by all states to adhere to the same national standards for all of the general disciplines of mathematics, reading, literacy, science, social studies, etc., and as such, to embrace a national criterion reference test that could gauge the progress toward meeting those standards. There is a call for a variety of assessments that would be utilized to gauge proficiency at particular transition grades, i.e. 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th grade (The Consortium on Renewing Education, 1998).

There is a general concern that accountability for education and the impact of education is not a shared responsibility between the local district, the state and the federal government. There is significant evidence of not providing funding for an adequate education in Arkansas with related liability for under-funding (equity) those districts that have significant numbers of students in poverty.

There is a companion concern for the federal interjection of accountability and a lack of funding to address the various disparities. It has been noted that the appropriations have fallen far short of the agreed upon funding level. State legislatures have passed resolutions asking that accountability standards be set aside until the promised funding becomes a reality. Results of the survey of Arkansas' superintendents concurred with the notion that accountability standards should be suspended until funding and technical assistance becomes a reality (Hook, 2004).

Superintendents noted that even with additional financial resources, the possibility of obtaining 100% proficiency at a specific date in time on a single test is highly questionable. The rationale for their observation is that the system is statistically rigged to ensure all or most public schools will not be able to sustain the arbitrary achievement growth requirements (Fair Test Examiner, 2003). The Arkansas statewide survey noted by a wide margin (80%) that reasonable improvement should be the guide, not a fixed standard.

From a number of different sources there are calls for modification of NCLB. As one of the current majority party's congressional representatives states in the *Los Angeles Times*, "The goals and requirements are just not attainable. It is going to hurt the president politically among school people who are elected to school boards . . . and community leaders" (Hook, 2004). Accountability needs to be an organizational and individual responsibility—not just for some!

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The Impact of Florida's A+ Plan for Education

Thomas Valesky and Cecil Carter

As states and the nation pursue school success through systems of accountability, one might ask whether or not such efforts will result in a healthier society in the United States. Covey stated the following (Covey, 1989):

It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover that it's leaning against the wrong wall. It is possible to be busy—very busy—without being effective. . . . If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster. (p. 98)

The connection between education and society is well established. As Dewey (1916) stated, “Discipline, culture, social efficiency, personal refinement, improvement of character are but phases of the growth of capacity. . . . And education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life” (p. 417). The economic benefits of education to individuals and society have been clearly documented (Webb, McCarthy & Thomas, 1988; King, Swanson & Sweetland, 2003). Among the non-economic benefits that correlate with a more educated populace are: better health, improved use of leisure time, higher rates of birth control, less need for public assistance programs, and less differential in income distribution (Webb, McCarthy & Thomas, 1988). Florida governor Jeb Bush stated, “I witnessed societal breakdown firsthand, and I found that lack of education was the common denominator” (Manhattan Institute, October 1999). The implication of this statement is that education is the key to preventing the breakdown of society. In Florida, as in most states, student learning and achievement are now at the forefront of the state's policy efforts. The federal government and the states have put into place elaborate accountability systems that are designed to motivate school officials to achieve desired outcomes. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has as its primary belief that (Strecher & Hamilton, 2003):

Test-based accountability systems embody the belief that public education can be improved through a simple strategy: test all students, and reward or sanction schools and districts based on the scores. Rewards can include formal public recognition and cash for teachers and schools. Sanctions can include progressively more severe interventions into school operations. (¶ 4)

Florida's System to produce high-quality schools embodies this belief. The question arises, “How will we know the A+ plan has been good for Florida?” To determine if the A+ plan has had a positive influence on Florida's educational and social fabric, one could examine trends over time on graduation rates, school grades, juvenile justice problems, and the numbers of parents taking advantage of vouchers to leave or return to the public education system among other indicators.

This paper is a preliminary review of some of these indicators. This is the second paper in a research stream that will focus on the effects of the Florida's accountability system, called the A+ plan. In this paper, we updated

the data in the first paper with a focus on the following: schools' grades for Florida schools through 2004–05; graduation rates; juvenile referral rates to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); the recidivism rate for juveniles in the DJJ system; and the rates of substance abuse and antisocial behaviors. Our subsequent research will focus on these data and the areas identified in the recommendations section.

HISTORY OF THE A+ PLAN

From the halls of elementary schools to the halls of the U. S. Capitol, opponents of school choice argue repeatedly that providing scholarships or “vouchers” for children to leave failing schools would be the end of public education. Some teacher and administrators call the A+ Plan “destructive” and “dangerous.” They worry that allowing students to leave failing schools would condemn those schools to continue to fail. So some might ask, “Why the A+ plan?”

Shortly after Jeb Bush was elected Governor and Frank Brogan was elected Lt. Governor in 1998, they announced that Florida's high school graduation rate was at 52%. Fifty percent of Florida's fourth graders were not able to read at the fourth grade level. In addition, a survey showed that over one-third of Florida's ninth graders, or about 60,000 ninth graders, had a D or F average. They worked with the legislature to develop the A+ Plan which was built upon two principles (Florida Department of Education, 2005a):

1. Each student should gain a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time in a Florida public school.
2. No student should be left behind.

The five highlights of the A+ Plan are:

1. Accountability.
2. Choice for parents.
3. More resources.
4. Rewards for improvement and success.
5. Change when students are not progressing. (§ 10–11)

The history of school grading in Florida began in 1998 when on November 24, 1998, the State Board of Education (chaired by former Governor Chiles) had approved the designation of five achievement levels for the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) score results. Schools were being graded using the five achievement levels (1–5). On the heels of this policy, Governor Bush expanded on the issue of accountability, and created the accountability program in 1999 to assure that Florida children had access to a quality education and were meeting state standards. The program was designed to give parents with children in failing schools choices as to where their child attended school. Scholarship programs were created to provide those parents with the necessary funding to send their children to public or private schools.

Florida uses two criterion-referenced tests: the FCAT and Florida Writes. These tests are based on the state standards called the Sunshine State Standards, and individual scores range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) for reading and math, and 1 to 6 for writing. Students are tested in the areas of reading and math in grades 3 to 10; writing in grades 4, 8, and 10; and science in grades 5, 8, and 10. Under the plan, schools earn points toward their school grade of A, B, C, D, or F from the following ways:

1. The percentage of students scoring a 3, 4 or 5 in reading and math (on a 5-point scale), and 3.5 or higher in writing (on a 6-point scale).
2. The percentage of students who improve their levels of achievement from the previous year; or who maintain a 3, 4 or 5; or for those who previously scored a 1 or 2 and who demonstrate a year's growth.
3. The percentage of students in the lowest 25% of the school who make learning gains.

Schools are deemed to have made “Adequate Progress” if 50% or more of the lowest 25% make learning gains, which is not to be confused with the federal “Adequate Yearly Progress” of NCLB. Schools must make “Adequate Progress” to make a school grade of A, B, or C. In addition, schools must test at least 90% of the stu-

dents to make a grade of B, C, D, or F, and at least 95% to receive a grade of A (Florida Department of Education, 2005a).

The plan includes a monetary attachment tied directly to the school site. Schools that receive an A or B grade are provided financial rewards to be spent in any way the School Advisory Council (SAC) determines. To make certain each school performs its due diligence, monetary penalty in the form of opportunity scholarships or “vouchers” can be issued to families of students attending failing schools under certain situations described below. In addition, as of June of 2002, the A+ Plan required all districts to put a salary schedule in place, which allows teachers and school administrators to earn at least 5% of their individual salary based on performance. Performance is based on learning gains. Teachers’ salaries will also be affected by a new career ladder plan beginning in the 2005-06 school year. Florida statute requires all teachers to be assessed and placed in one of four career ladder levels: Associate Teacher, Professional Teacher, Lead Teacher, and Mentor Teacher (Fla. Stat. § 1012.231).

Another goal of the A+ Plan is to offer parents choices. There are three sources of law and funding for permitting parents a school choice option in Florida. Using these laws, parents may opt out of public education in Florida and enroll in a qualified private school, including religious schools, or they may opt out of their current public school placement for another public school of their choice. These three choices for parents are Opportunity Scholarships, John M. McKay Scholarships Program for Students with Disabilities, and Corporation Tax Credits (CTC). Each of these is described below. In January 2006, the Supreme Court of Florida declared the Opportunity Scholarships and the John McKay Scholarships unconstitutional since the vouchers these programs provide to parents can be used in religious schools. At the writing of this manuscript (March 2006), the Florida legislature is working on both legislation and constitutional amendments in an attempt to uphold these programs.

Opportunity Scholarships Program (i.e., Vouchers)

The Opportunity Scholarships Program allows students attending failing schools to choose a higher performing public school or attend a private school, including church-related schools. Students become eligible after their schools receive a grade of “F” twice within a four year period. The amount of the scholarship is the same as the student would have received in his or her regular public school or the amount of private schools tuition, whichever is less. The plan includes a voucher system for one main reason: to motivate or influence the lowest performing schools to make progress towards increasing the “quality” of the education they provide to their students. The plan uses the voucher system to do this by the threat of losing state financial support via the voucher system.

The Opportunity Scholarships Program has been the subject of litigation. In *Bush v. Holmes* (2000/2004), the plaintiffs maintain that the program violates Article I, Section 3 of the state constitution which states in part, “No revenue of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid of any church, sect, or religious denomination or in aid of any sectarian institution.” The circuit court and the appellate court have both ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. Oral arguments before the Florida Supreme Court have been heard and a ruling is pending.

John M. McKay Scholarships Program for Students with Disabilities

This program allows parents of students with disabilities to choose a private or public school environment for their children if they are dissatisfied with their children’s progress on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. This program provides an amount equal to the student’s matrix of services to the qualified school. The matrix of services has five levels, with level 5 students needing the most services and therefore the most money (48 Fla. Stat. § 1002.39 2004).

The McKay Scholarships Program started in 1998 with only two individuals. In 2002, the program had 5,019 participants for an average of \$5547 per child. In 2003, 9,202 students participated, which was approximately 2.5% of the eligible student population of special education students (Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 2004). To qualify, private schools must have been in existence for at least one year, provide a certified audit of their finances, keep scholarship money in a separate account, and abide by a non-discrimination admissions

policy. Woodand and McClure (2004) stated that there were 504 private schools that participated in 2003. Of these, 314 (54%) of the schools were classified as religious, while 184 (37%) were classified as non-religious. They conclude that the McKay scholarship program is a success based on the stated purposes of increasing school choice opportunities resulting in an explosive increase in the number of students taking advantage of the McKay scholarships, and the retention rate of around 84%.

In addition, Greene and Forster (2003), conducted telephone interviews of 815 parents of McKay scholarship students who attended McKay schools in 2001-02 and 2002-03. They state that parent satisfaction levels were higher in McKay schools than when their children went to public schools. Highlights of the findings include: class size dropped from 25.1 to 12.8; students were victimized less; students received more services required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and behavior problems dropped. Although important, this study has some design flaws in that there was no direct comparison to a similar population who remained in public schools.

Credits for Contributions to Nonprofit Scholarship-Funding Organizations

Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships (CTC) program permits any taxpayer or corporation meeting qualifications to provide scholarship money in lieu of any tax due for a taxable year. Taxpayers who file under an affiliated group (i.e., corporation) may be allowed the credit from their affiliated group return only, and 5% of all contributed scholarship money must be set aside for small businesses. The total amount of scholarship money cannot exceed 88 million dollars (14 Fla. Stat. § 220.187 2004). Currently, corporations are limited to a \$5,000,000 tax credit. The scholarship money may be used in private schools, including religious schools. This scholarship money is available to low-income families who aren't eligible for McKay or Opportunity Scholarships. Once pre-qualified, parents have a place on the first come/first served waiting list for funding availability for these scholarships. However, Florida law does not control how or if schools admit students. In 2002-03, 15,000 CTC scholarships (1.4% of eligible students) were distributed out of 55,000 applications from an eligible base of 1,098,140 students (Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 2004). Scholarships may not exceed \$3500 for any individual student per year for a private school, and \$500 to a student enrolled in a Florida public school outside of his/her district. The statute indicates that the purposes of this scholarship are to encourage private contributions, to expand family choice opportunities to low income families, and "to achieve a greater level of excellence in their education" (Fla. Stat. § 220.187 2004). At present, the schools are not held accountable for achievement levels of students. In 2003, there was draft legislation to have these schools use either the FCAT or a state-approved substitute. The scores would be submitted to an independent research organization chosen by the state that would then report annually to the Department of Education on student gains. This legislation was not approved. No research has been found related to the success or failure of this program.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

School Grades

How effective has the voucher plan been thus far in Florida? Greene (2001) analyzed the increase in math, reading, and writing scores in Florida schools from 1999 to 2000. He found that the F schools improved significantly greater than did all other school designations. He also attempted to determine if there was a "voucher" effect on F schools by comparing High F schools to Low D schools¹. Greene's estimated effect sizes of the "voucher effect" were 0.12 in reading, 0.30 in math, and 0.41 in writing. His assumption was that these schools were very similar and that any difference in FCAT gains would be attributable to the motivation to succeed caused by the vouchers. He found that the High F schools improved significantly in the Writing and Math categories, but not in Reading. In a stinging rebuttal to Greene's analysis, Camilli and Bulkley (2001) concluded that there were ". . . serious questions regarding the validity of Greene's empirical results and conclusions"

¹High F schools were defined as those scoring above the average for all F schools. Low D schools were defined as those below the average of all D schools.

(Conclusion section, ¶ 1). They state that Greene's analysis has two primary problems. One, Greene aggregated the grade level gain scores across all grades tested (grades 4, 5, 8, and 10 where applicable in Reading, Math, and Writing). Second, Greene did not account for regression to the mean. Camilli and Bulkley's reanalysis of Greene's data suggest that there was a small, but insignificant, effect in 8th grade reading and mathematics. The only significant effect was in 4th grade writing where they found an effect size of .23, where Greene found an effect size for writing of 2.23. They stated that Greene's effect sizes were so large that they represent "... the highest gains ever recorded for an educational intervention. Results like these, if true, would be nothing short of miraculous. . . ." (Summary of the Evaluation of Florida's A-Plus Program section, ¶ 2). Finally, in responding to Greene's assertion that the effects he found were due to the voucher threat, Camilli and Bulkley suggested "... it is overly simplistic to assume that the voucher threat was the only active agent, or that other causes were contingent on the voucher threat" (Discussion section, final ¶). In a similar rebuttal to Greene, Kupermintz (2001) argued that in his dismissal of regression toward the mean effects, "Greene seems to confuse regression toward the mean with floor and ceiling effects—completely different phenomena" (An Elusive Regression Artifact section, ¶ 2). Kupermintz agreed, however, with an article in the St. Petersburg Times newspaper which concluded that the gains in the writing portion of the FCAT were made because low performing schools targeted instruction toward the test, using a "shamelessly formulaic approach" to teach writing (Conclusion section, ¶ 1).

Examining the effects of the Florida A+ plan on five schools, Goldhaber and Hannaway (2004) suggested that researchers must be careful when implying, that as Greene did, a voucher-effect exists. Their case studies suggest that, as told to them by the teachers and principals, the social stigma of receiving an F grade was a motivating factor. In addition, they suggest that three other factors must be considered: additional resources provided to F schools for improvement; the movement of personnel in and out of F schools; and a narrowing of the curriculum focus, particularly in writing initially, and then reading and finally math. Examples of how the first two issues impacted the schools are that: (a) some teachers wanted to work in F schools because of the additional resources they knew would be available, and; (b) that principals of F schools were generally replaced.

The Florida A+ choice and accountability plan offers vouchers (called Opportunity Scholarships) to students attending failing schools that have received a school grade of F for two out of four years, as a way to motivate schools to improve their academic performance. Data collected on the state website indicate a general increase in schools receiving a grade of A or B through the years of 1998/99 to 2004/05, and a decrease in schools receiving grades of C, D or F between these same years (see Table 1).

In the last year (2004-05), the percentage of D or F schools increased from 8.7% to 11.1%. The Florida State Department of Education explains this increase due to a higher proficiency level required in writing, and because both student with disabilities and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were included in school learning gains for the first time.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

If the FCAT is truly testing how well students are achieving, then students should show gains on any standardized test, as they did on the FCAT. The only other statewide test currently given in Florida is the NAEP. Al-

Table 1. Percentage of A through F School Grades in Florida from 1998/99 to 2004/05.

School Grade	Year						
	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
A	8.3	24	13.8	36.9	49.3	47.5	45.2
B	12.9	11	19.3	22.8	22.5	20.5	21.3
A OR B	21.2	35	33.1	59.7	71.8	68	66.5
C	50.8	48.3	52.5	29.9	21.3	23.2	22.4
D	24.8	16.5	14.4	7.6	5.5	6.9	8.3
F	3.1	0.2	0	2.6	1.4	1.8	2.8
D OR F	27.9	16.7	14.4	10.2	6.9	8.7	11.1

Table 2. Florida NAEP Scores in Reading, Math, and Writing from 1996 to 2003.

Grades	Reading			Math		Writing	
	1998	2002	2003	1996	2003	1998	2002
4	206	214	218	216	234	158	
8	255	261	257	264	271	142	254

though the NAEP has not been given every year in reading, math and writing, some scores are available to make comparisons to the FCAT improvements. As one can see in Table 2, each subsequent administration has shown improvement, with one exception (8th grade reading in 2003).

A Florida Department of Education website touts the writing improvement in 2002, indicating that the 4th graders ranked 3rd in the nation, and 8th graders ranked 5th. However, the website does not emphasize that reading and math scores rank lower than most states (Florida Department of Education, 2005d).

Greene (2001) did an analysis of FCAT correlation to the Stanford 9 which at one time was given in Florida. He compared how well schools did in reading and math on the FCAT and the Stanford 9 administered in the spring of 2000. Correlation coefficients ranged from .86 to .95 which indicates a high degree of correlation. Greene's conclusion was that the FCAT is a valid measure of student achievement.

Graduation Rates

State resources indicate a substantial increase in graduation rates since 1998 (Florida Department of Education, 2005b). This trend is displayed in Table 3:

Florida's tracking system of high school graduation is fairly sophisticated in that it tracks actual students by name, rather than the numbers who enter in the 9th grade and graduate in the 12th grade. This latter system was used by Florida prior to 2000 and is currently used by most states (Florida Department of Education, 2005c). Unfortunately, the graduation rates reported by the state of Florida include those receiving a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED). Since Florida has a high number of GED recipients, this inflates the actual high school graduation rates that may be attributable to the A+ program (Greene, 2002). Greene and Forster (2003–2004) further stated that "... counting GED recipients as if they were high school graduates is misleading if our purpose is to gauge the success of the high school system in graduating students" (High School Graduation Rate section, ¶ 4). Their analysis of national graduation rates for 2000–01 ranks Florida dead last at 56% compared to 63.8% by the state of Florida (Greene & Forster, 2003–2004).

Dropout Rates

Similar trends are found in the Dropout rates for Florida schools as seen in Table 4. From a high of 5.4% in 1998–99, the dropout rate has declined steadily to 2.9% in 2003–04.

Table 3. Graduation Rates from 1998 through 2004.

Year	Graduation Rate
1998–1999	60.2
1999–2000	62.3
2000–2001	63.8
2001–2002	67.9
2002–2003	69.0
2003–2004	71.6

Table 4. Dropout Rates from 1998 through 2004.

Year	Graduation Rate
1998–1999	5.4
1999–2000	4.6
2000–2001	3.8
2001–2002	3.2
2002–2003	3.1
2003–2004	2.9

Juvenile Crime Rates

When looking for evidence that the A+ Plan has had a positive impact on Florida, juvenile crime rates were considered as important indicators. The data support that most juvenile crime trends are favorable; however, there is no direct correlation to the State's school system. Florida's k-12 schools cannot be held accountable for all changes in the juvenile crime rate as there are many factors that can affect these rates. For example, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has a juvenile crime prevention program that provides grants to a variety of agencies. However, in the last 5 years, the amount of money for DJJ has continued to decline, so its effect on referral and recidivism rates should be considered minimal at best (Mary Ann Zager, professor of criminal justice, personal communication, July 21, 2005). Nevertheless, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice is working diligently to provide services for high-risk students. Their Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services concentrates on early identification and intensive services and supervision of juvenile offenders with the highest risk of becoming repeat serious offenders. This approach looks at juveniles with records who were first arrested at age 15 or younger, and whether they have at least three of four high-risk characteristics:

1. Academic failure, suspensions and truancy.
2. Lack of family stability, including poor parental control, lack of parenting skills and a family member in the criminal justice system.
3. Mental health and substance abuse problems.
4. Pre-delinquent behaviors including running away, gang affiliation, acting disruptive and stealing.

It is assumed, however, that through the implementation of the A+ Plan, more students will graduate thereby increasing and improving the quality of the state's workforce. It is also assumed that completing one's high school education will prepare a student to participate better in the community thereby reducing juvenile crime. We must therefore assume that the A+ Plan will have some impact on juvenile crime rates over time. Although generally the trends are encouraging, an increase in the proportion of female juvenile offenders is a particularly alarming statistic. According to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (2005b):

Table 5. Number of Juvenile Referrals from 1999–00 to 2003–04.

Offense Type	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	5 Year Change
Felony	52,727	51,469	48,494	47,203	46,740	–11%
Misdemeanor	81,606	79,087	76,791	76,730	78,114	–5%
Other Offenses	18,831	22,286	24,813	27,151	30,575	+62%
Total Referrals	153,164	152,842	150,098	151,084	155,429	+1%
Referrals per 1000	95.7	90.9	87.9	87.0	87.5	–9%

Table 6. Recidivism data for referral to Florida Division of Juvenile Justice from 2000–01 to 2002–03.

Year	Number of Youth Released	Percent with Prior Charges	Seriousness Index of Prior Charges ²	6 Month Follow-up	1 Year Follow-up
2000–01	47,394	36%	4.0	13%	NA
2001–02	36,408	34%	3.6	9%	14%
2002–03	37,848	36%	3.6	8%	13%

One out of four juvenile offenders in Florida is a girl. There has been a 67 percent increase in the number of girls referred for delinquency over the past decade in Florida; delinquency referrals of boys rose 25 percent in that time period. The number of girls arrested for violent felonies has more than doubled in the past eight years, from 1,400 in FY 1990-91 to 3,143 in FY 1998-99. (Female Juvenile Offenders, ¶ 1)

For both boys and girls, referral rates for juvenile offenders from 1999-00 to 2003-04 have decreased slightly through 2001, but then increased the following two years through 2003-04. From 1999-00 to 2003-04, however, felony rates among juveniles decreased by 11% and misdemeanors decreased by 4%. The “other” category increased dramatically by 62%. See Table 5 for a display of these data (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2005a). The numbers of referrals are somewhat misleading, however, since the number of youth in Florida has increased each year. A better way to look at these data, then, is by the rate per 1000, which is displayed in the last line of the table. The referrals per 1000 decline steadily each year until 2003–04 which increased slightly.

Recidivism among juvenile offenders in Florida is down. The percentage of juveniles staying out of trouble for a year after release from a residential commitment treatment program has improved from 54% in 1996 to 59% during FY 2001–02. A 4% improvement in recidivism is worth an estimated \$65 million in long-term cost savings.

The \$65 million includes \$35 million less spent by law enforcement, the courts, the juvenile justice system and the adult correctional system. It also includes \$30 million in projected savings to victims. That is based on juveniles’ typical record five years after release from a delinquency program. A 4% decline in recidivism among delinquents represents the prevention of an estimated 131 assaults, 100 burglaries, 77 auto thefts, 34 robberies, 4 rapes and 10 murders over a five-year period. Regardless of which agency is responsible for the decline in juvenile crime, a decrease in juvenile recidivism benefits Florida. As seen in Table 6, recidivism after six months has declined from a high of 13% in 2000–01 to 8.0 in 2002-03. Also during this time, the seriousness of the charges against the youth has decreased (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2005a).

Table 7. Percentage of Substance Abuse in the Past 30 Days as Reported by Florida Youth in Grades 6–12 from 2000 to 2004.

Year of Survey	Drinking Alcohol	Binge Drinking	Cigarettes	Marijuana	Any Drug other than Marijuana	Alcohol or any Illicit Drug
2000	34.3	18.8	18.4	14.4	9.3	38.2
2001	32.6	16.8	13.5	13.0	8.2	36.2
2002	31.2	16.0	11.4	12.1	7.5	34.8
2003	30.9	16.0	11.5	12.8	10.5	35.7
2004	32.3	16.0	11.4	11.5	10.6	37.1

²The seriousness index is comprised of the sum of all scores for all prior charges. Values are assigned as follows: 8 for violent felony, 5 for property felony, 2 for misdemeanor assault, and 1 for other offenses.

Table 8. Percentage of Antisocial Behaviors in the Past 12 Months as Reported by Florida Youth in Grades 6–12 from 2000 to 2004.

Year of Survey	School Suspension	Attack Someone to Harm Them	Drunk or High at School	Being Arrested	Selling Drugs	Carrying a Gun
2000	19.3	18.1	15.5	9.3	7.9	5.8
2001	15.3	13.0	13.5	6.5	6.5	3.8
2002	14.9	12.1	12.7	5.6	5.8	3.7
2003	14.9	12.2	13.3	5.8	5.7	4.1
2004	15.5	12.7	12.8	5.8	5.6	3.9

An analysis was also done of the of the annual Florida Youth survey from 2000 to 2004. A questionnaire is sent to a stratified random sample of students from grades 6 to 12 from each county. In Table 7, one can see that, although there has been a slight increase from 2003 to 2004 in the use of alcohol and in the use of alcohol or any illicit drug, there has been a steady decline in substance abuse since 2000.

As one can see in Table 8, there has also been a steady decline in antisocial behaviors as measured by the Florida Youth Survey. These are behaviors that do not necessarily occur at school. For example, the number of youth who have carried a gun include both in school and out of school incidents. When examining the incidents of carrying a gun to school, the numbers were actually too low to be meaningful each year. This is good news.

HIGH STAKES TESTING

The results are not yet in on the Florida A+ Plan. In a Rand Corporation study, Stecher and Hamilton (2002) suggested that early results from high stakes testing are circumspect. For example, they found that students in Kentucky performed four times better on state test than on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and they found even larger gains in Texas on the state's high stakes test than on NAEP. If the state's accountability system was, in fact, increasing student achievement, then that progress should be reflected in any standardized test, including the state's high stakes test. Stecher and Hamilton stated the following concerning high stakes accountability systems:

The evidence has yet to justify the expectations. The initial evidence is, at best, mixed. On the plus side, students and teachers seem to respond to the incentives created by the accountability systems, and test scores generally rise. Yet how this occurs is puzzling. It could be the result of students working harder, of teachers adopting better strategies, and of everyone focusing on the desired subject matter. On the minus side, it is unclear if the test score gains reflect meaningful improvements in student learning or, rather, artificial score inflation caused by excessive coaching or other kinds of narrow test preparation. If the test scores are indeed inflated, then they send misleading signals about student performance. The accountability systems can also lead to academically undesirable changes in curriculum and instruction, such as emphasizing some subjects or topics at the expense of others. (¶ 6)

In addition, they found that while the test's curriculum content areas may improve, other areas of the curriculum that are not tested decrease in achievement. In the near future, Florida intends to test all content areas, even physical education. It will be interesting to see how the scores in the tested areas of reading, math and writing fare after they lose instructional time to the newly tested areas.

Stecher and Hamilton (2002) summarize findings and evidence from their examination of testing in California, Florida, Kentucky, Texas, Vermont, and other states. The following table summarizes the six common expectations that were observed throughout all of the data collected.

Scherer and Hamilton (2002) also found of positive and negative effects for students, teachers, administrators and policymakers. The following tables summarize and outline the effects for each of the above groups. Based on our discussions with graduate students who are teachers and administrators in Florida, we concur with these findings.

Six Common Expectations of Accountability Plans

- 1 We can expect average test scores to rise each year for the first 3–4 years.
- 2 Expect to some extent that the large gains may not be indicative of real gains in knowledge and skills that the tests were designed to measure. There is extensive evidence that the scores on high-stakes tests rise faster than the scores on other standardized tests that are given to the same students at the same time to measure aptitude in the same subjects (Norm Referenced Tests).
- 3 There will be more emphasis on tested subjects and less on nontested subjects.
- 4 Expect an increase in undesirable test-related behaviors including a narrow focus on test preparation that takes time away from normal instruction.
- 5 Expect large annual fluctuations in the scores for many schools. This results from a variety of factors such as student mobility, different cohorts of students taking the tests, measurement error and other transitory conditions.
- 6 Sanctions imposed on low performing schools will not ensure that the students in those schools are not 'left behind'. Sanctions often include external consultants and ultimately administrative and staff reassignments and school take over. The evidence of success on these tactics is mixed, and there is no guarantee that sanctions will result in improved educational environments or improvements in student achievement.

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

POSTIVE	NEGATIVE
<p>Provide students with better information about their own knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Motivate students to work harder in school.</p> <p>Send clearer signals to students about what to study.</p> <p>Help students associate personal efforts with rewards.</p>	<p>Frustrate students and discourage them from trying.</p> <p>Make students more competitive.</p> <p>Cause students to devalue grades and school assessments.</p>

EFFECTS ON TEACHERS

POSTIVE	NEGATIVE
<p>Support better diagnosis of individual student needs.</p> <p>Help teachers identify areas of strength and weakness in their curriculum.</p> <p>Help teachers to identify content not mastered by students and redirect instruction.</p> <p>Motivate teachers to work harder and smarter.</p> <p>Lead teachers to align instruction with standards.</p> <p>Encourage teachers to participate in professional development to improve instruction.</p>	<p>Encourage teachers to focus on specific test content more than curriculum standards.</p> <p>Lead teachers to engage in inappropriate test preparation.</p> <p>Devalue teachers' sense of professional worth.</p> <p>Entice teachers to cheat when preparing for or administering tests.</p>

EFFECTS ON ADMINISTRATORS

POSTIVE	NEGATIVE
Cause administrators to examine school policies related to curriculum and instruction.	Lead administrators to enact policies to increase test scores but not necessarily increase learning.
Help administrators judge the quality of their programs.	Cause administrators to reallocate resources to tested subjects at the expense of other subjects.
Lead administrators to change school policies to improve curriculum and instruction.	Lead administrators to waste resources on test preparation.
Help administrators make better resource allocation decisions.	Distract administrators from other school needs and problems.

EFFECTS ON POLICY MAKERS

POSTIVE	NEGATIVE
Help policymakers judge the effectiveness of educational policies.	Provide misleading information that leads policymakers to make suboptimum decisions.
Improve policymaker's ability to monitor school system performance.	Foster a 'blame the victims' spirit among policymakers.
Foster better allocation of state educational resources.	Encourage a simplistic view of education and the goals of education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Has the A+ Plan been successful? Based on past performance and the assumptions identified by Stecher and Hamilton (2002), one can predict that in the short term the public schools in Florida will continue to improve their scores on the FCAT. The data presented in this paper are encouraging. Test scores, dropout rates, and graduation rates continue to improve. The Florida A+ Plan accountability system will continue to appear to be working successfully with increasing student performance, and perhaps this is sufficient to hail the program's success. In the longer term, however, the economic, political, and social benefits of accountability plans, such as A+, need to be analyzed. Has the A+ Plan been successful in reducing the amount of juvenile crime and eventually adult crime? Are unemployment rates reduced? Do schools become more effective if threatened with vouchers? These are only a few of the type of hard-hitting questions that policy makers need to address, and it is up to the researchers to provide sufficient information to help guide changes in the accountability systems that affect the educational system of the state.

Thus far, the data on social benefits are positive for juvenile referrals, recidivism, substance abuse, and anti-social behaviors. We cannot say that the A+ Plan is the cause for these data, however, it must be considered as one factor. When considering juvenile crime statistics and other factors surrounding juvenile behavior, some actions that schools could take would provide a direct solution to several of the social issues that affect students, perhaps more so than school grading programs. Since juvenile crime, including violent offenses, peaks around 3pm, which is the time school normally dismisses, implementing after-school programs that provide recreational or academic activities for students could provide a partial solution to juvenile crime. In addition, there is a high mobility of youth and families in Florida. Frequently changing homes, neighborhoods and schools, are risk factors that increases delinquency. Juvenile offenders in Florida whose crimes are serious enough to merit placement in residential programs typically come from single-parent households; and these students are usually truants, dropouts or are doing poorly in school. School districts, therefore, should consider policies that would deter parents from transferring students mid year; however, for legal reasons, this is highly unlikely. Recommendations like these will have more persuasiveness in Florida when the data clearly support them.

As we move forward in this stream of research, we anticipate a replication of the Greene study that looked at the “voucher effect” to include an analysis since 1999. However, the flaws in Greene’s study as pointed out by Camilli and Bulkley (2001) concerning aggregating data across all grade levels must be addressed. In addition, as Goldhaber and Hannaway (2004) point out, factors other than a voucher effect may be responsible for school improvement, such as staff movement in and out of the school (including leadership). We will attempt to control for these variables. In addition, we plan to study the impact of the A+ Plan on juvenile crime rates should identify individual students who are referred to DJJ, their FCAT scores, and DJJ programs in which they may be involved. Finally, we plan to complete another study of the importance in how schools are directing resources toward instruction and school improvement and whether or not increased funding improves school FCAT grades.

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Principals Leadership Academy: Creating a School Culture of Continuous Improvement

Lloyd C. Kilmer, Dean L. Halverson and Georgianna Koenig

“New ideas of any worth to be effective require an in-depth understanding, and the development of skill and commitment to make them work.” (Fullan, 1993, p. 23)

The Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency (AEA) has sponsored an in-service series for principals for the past eight years. The leadership of the General Education Division of the AEA brings opportunities for professional development to principals to improve their leadership skills and professional practices. In addition, the Iowa School District Comprehensive School Improvement Process (CSIP), and its attendant building level plans, that was mandated by the State of Iowa for the 2004–05 school year has been a driver in providing information and designing learning processes and practice for principals.

The guiding questions of the 2004–05 Principals Leadership Academy (PLA) were:

1. What does a school culture that results in learning for all students look like and sound like? How does my school compare?
2. What does a collaborative professional learning environment look like and sound like? How does my school compare?
3. How do national, state and local initiatives align with this work?

PURPOSE

The content of the PLA sessions was designed by AEA staff, in collaboration with an Advisory Group made of representatives of local school districts and professors from the higher education partner institution, Western Illinois University. The group, led by General Education Director, Dr. Kristine Wolzen, determined that providers of leadership content would be contacted and interviewed to identify appropriate research based information and implementations strategies for the PLA audience. This audience included K–12 building principals from rural, suburban and urban districts and central office personnel from some of the districts.

The contracted content provider was Dr. Todd Whitaker, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Indiana State University. Dr. Whitaker, a nationally known speaker, is the author of several popular books on the principalship. His seven day–long sessions emphasized simple, direct strategies for improving principal practice. Examples included setting expectations, working with difficult faculty members, improving the culture of the school and teacher recruitment and interviewing techniques. In addition, information and discussion of initiatives from the Iowa State Department of Education were shared with principals during three day-long sessions presented by agency personnel.

The design of the yearlong series of workshops for the PLA was based on the National Staff Development Council’s (NSDC) standards for staff development. In addition, the self-assessment rubric used for data collection was adapted from the Practices Innovation Leadership Configuration rubric developed by NSDC, Used with permission of the National Staff Development Council, (www.nsde.org), 2004. All rights reserved. The

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Standards are divided into three categories: context, process, and content. These standards provided the developers with guidance on applying research based adult learning theory to the process of delivering the content. In addition, the workshop designers had been exposed to the emerging research developed by Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning. The MCREL research meta-analysis on the relationship between leadership and student achievement was considered in the design and accountability system for the PLA (Waters, Marzanno, and McNulty, 2004).

Finally, designers considered the five governing steps in adult learning theory in the content and implementation of the PLA workshops:

1. Link professional learning to the vision and mission of the school or district.
2. Collect and analyze student achievement data to determine student outcomes.
3. Determine priorities based on student outcomes.
4. Determine the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that staff members (principals) need to develop to accomplish the aforementioned outcomes for students.
5. Work collaboratively to develop a plan for professional learning (Roberts and Pruitt, 2003).

CONTEXT STANDARDS

Staff Development that Improves the Learning of All Students

1. Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)
2. Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (Leadership)
3. Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (Resources) (NSDC, 2005)

There were a variety of session elements that reinforced this standard. For example, the developers provided background information and demonstration of the principles of learning communities and effective teaming in two AEA created sessions. The theory of learning communities, endorsed by Dr. Richard DuFour through his work at Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, IL, was presented and several scenarios and demonstrations of effective and ineffective teams were created on DVD and presented. Participants discussed their observations of team behaviors and processes illustrated in the scenarios presented. In addition there were work sessions on carrying out the components of the Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM), which has a heavy emphasis on collaboration.

Dr. Whitaker also paired each of the principals with a colleague and arranged for site visits to the colleague's school. The intent of the visitation was to gather impartial feedback on an issue of concern to the participants. For example, one assistant principal wanted information about the effectiveness of his regular daily method of communicating with staff, students and other personnel. The results elicited suggestions on participation in faculty in-service activities and on approaches to student discipline.

PROCESS STANDARDS

Staff Development that Improves the Learning of All Students

1. Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (Data-Driven)
2. Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (Evaluation)
3. Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (Research-Based)
4. Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (Design)
5. Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (Learning)
6. Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Collaboration) (NSDC, 2005)

Data driven decision-making was another theme of several of the workshops. Data was gathered using the School Culture instrument after a session presented on school culture. It was administered on-line to faculty in each participant's school. Dr. Whitaker used the results to illustrate to the principals any areas of strength or opportunities for improvement reflected in the survey results. There were also several presentations by participants and guest principals on the progress being made in their schools on various academic and operational initiatives.

There were other opportunities to teach principals skills to assist building level teams to review and select scientifically based research and to create and implement effective professional development guided by the Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM, 2005). IPDM was based on the work of Joyce and Showers. The participants were provided with process examples and simulations to illustrate this data driven decision-making. For instance, one activity required participants to solve a math problem on setting up collaborative time, in-service time and other delivery opportunities for building based professional development. They also had to apply data driven decision-making in measuring implementation and the fidelity of student application of the new strategies presented in the professional development.

Dr. Whitaker devoted portions of several sessions on effective communication. There were strategies on clearly communicating expectations at the start of the year; preparing a weekly staff newsletter (Friday Focus); emphasizing positive events in the school; modeling the appropriate language to use when confronting difficult teachers (Whitaker, 1999); and phrasing interview questions that reinforce the school culture. Practice in using this language and the procedural approach was offered in the context of the workshops, "Opportunities for group discussion and collegial problem solving typically result in more informed decisions and ownership of those decisions" (Tate, 2004, p. xxv).

Reflection is also an essential element of adult learning theory. (Tate, 2004, p. 105). According to Tate, "In absence of reflection, teachers (principals) either tend not to change behavior or they spend too much time simply recounting everything that had not worked in the past" After the first session, Dr. Whitaker asked that each participant write an action goal related to the opening of school or setting goals for the new school year. These action goals were submitted on-line and revisited several times during the year. During the final six weeks of the series, participants were required to write and share a reflection on their leadership activities for the year and the effect of any changes put into practice. This data, combined with the interviews completed with the case study sample, revealed the content of the goal areas and the principals' perception of the effectiveness of these activities.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Staff Development that Improves the Learning of All Students

1. Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (Equity)
2. Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (Quality Teaching)
3. Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement) (NSDC, 2005)

The Content Standards reflect the need for professional development that does not ignore the needs of students, their families and other stakeholders. Principals routinely are involved with planning and administration of policies and practices to support students and their families. Early in the year, Dr. Whitaker devoted considerable time to student issues such as setting high expectations, focusing on student needs and supporting "student centered teaching." Whitaker emphasized, "It is people, not programs that determine the quality of a school" (2003, p.8). In addition, he emphasized that school improvement boils down to two strategies: get better teachers and/or improve the teachers you have. Many of his anecdotal stories, which rang true with the participants according to their feedback comments, were about common sense approaches to solving the everyday problems of the school community.

Though Dr. Whitaker's content was selected and delivered by him, he consulted frequently with AEA staff in shaping the sessions. The topics covered in the PLA Workshops included:

1. What Great Principals Do Differently (Whitaker)
2. School Culture (Whitaker)
3. Effective Collaborative Teams (AEA)
4. Implementing Change/Dealing with Resistors (Whitaker)
5. Iowa Professional Development Model—Making Your CSIP Work (AEA)
6. Team Building/Involving Others (Whitaker)
7. Improving Instruction/Evaluation (Whitaker)
8. Instructional Decision Making (AEA)
9. Interviewing, Mentoring, Induction (Whitaker)
10. Celebrating Success (Whitaker)

METHODOLOGY

At the end of his workshop, Whitaker conducted the following survey to determine the effectiveness of the presentation.

Research Questions

1. Will the principals apply the knowledge gained in the workshops to improving their school culture?
2. Will the principals establish or enhance the collaborative professional learning environment in their schools?
3. Will the principals apply the elements of local and state initiatives presented in the workshops?

Research Design

1. Sixteen principals (and four alternates) were recruited for a case study with consideration for demographic equity within the region and by grade level. Researchers from the AEA and Western Illinois University completed the interview process and analysis of data collected.
2. Participants completed the Practices Innovation Configuration Survey (Leadership) adapted from the PICS created by the National Staff Development Council. The research subjects also completed a semi-structured or focused type interview with a research team member in the fall and spring. The interviewer asked a set of consistent open-ended questions to each participant to explore the participant's self-rating completed on the PICS.
3. The results of the PICS Leadership Survey were submitted electronically and were collected in an Access database.
4. The results of the fall and spring interviews were collected, analyzed and coded for themes for existing building leadership conditions and behaviors prior to the workshop. The spring interviews focused on conditions and behaviors that might have been different after training.

AEA 9 Program Data Collection

1. Participant satisfaction with each of the workshops was collected using the standard instruments authorized by the AEA.
2. A final reflection on the participants' application of principles, activities and new information gained in the 2004-05 PLA was submitted in May prior to the last workshop. These documents were analyzed to determine the types of changes that principals made in their practices, changes in building operations and changes in their approach to management and instructional leadership.

Table 1. Participant Demographics.

Position	Number
Alternative School Administrator	7
Elementary Administrator	43
Middle or Intermediate Level Administrator	13
High School Administrator	15
Central Office Administrator	7
AEA Administrator or Consultant	20
Other	5
Total	110

RESULTS

The results of the analysis of the data collected on the satisfaction of the participants with the content; the participants' reflections on practices they changed; and the case study data revealed a positive effect of the training on the in-service participants.

Satisfaction Data

Surveys of satisfaction required by AEA policy were administered after each session of the 04-05 PLA. The participants' job and level demographics are listed in Table 1.

The participants overall ratings of the professional development provided through the 04-05 PLA as measured by the standard AEA feedback form reflected high satisfaction. The ratings are included in Table 2.

All PLA participants were asked to submit a final reflection on their learning experiences from the 04-05 PLA. They were introduced to the on-line data collection instrument during the April session and had an opportunity to share and begin discussion on the learning they had gained. The participants then completed the reflection and submitted it on-line to the research team at the AEA. The team then categorized the responses to determine: how the principals applied their knowledge of improving school operations, how they enhanced the professional learning environment and how they applied the requirements from local and state initiatives.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 reflect the responses in priority order in a Pareto chart. Figure 1 reflects PLA applications of continuous improvement goals.

Figure 2 reflects PLA applications of professional learning communities.

Figure 3 reflects PLA applications of State and local initiatives.

Table 2. Participant Satisfaction.

AEA Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The course content was of high quality	58.19	36.76	3.78	1.26
2. The material covered will assist me in improving instruction.	58.23	37.76	2.53	1.48
3. The ideas and skills presented will be immediately useful in improving student learning.	52.63	43.58	2.32	1.47
4. The facilities were comfortable and conducive to a quality learning experience.	66.46	31.43	0.84	1.27

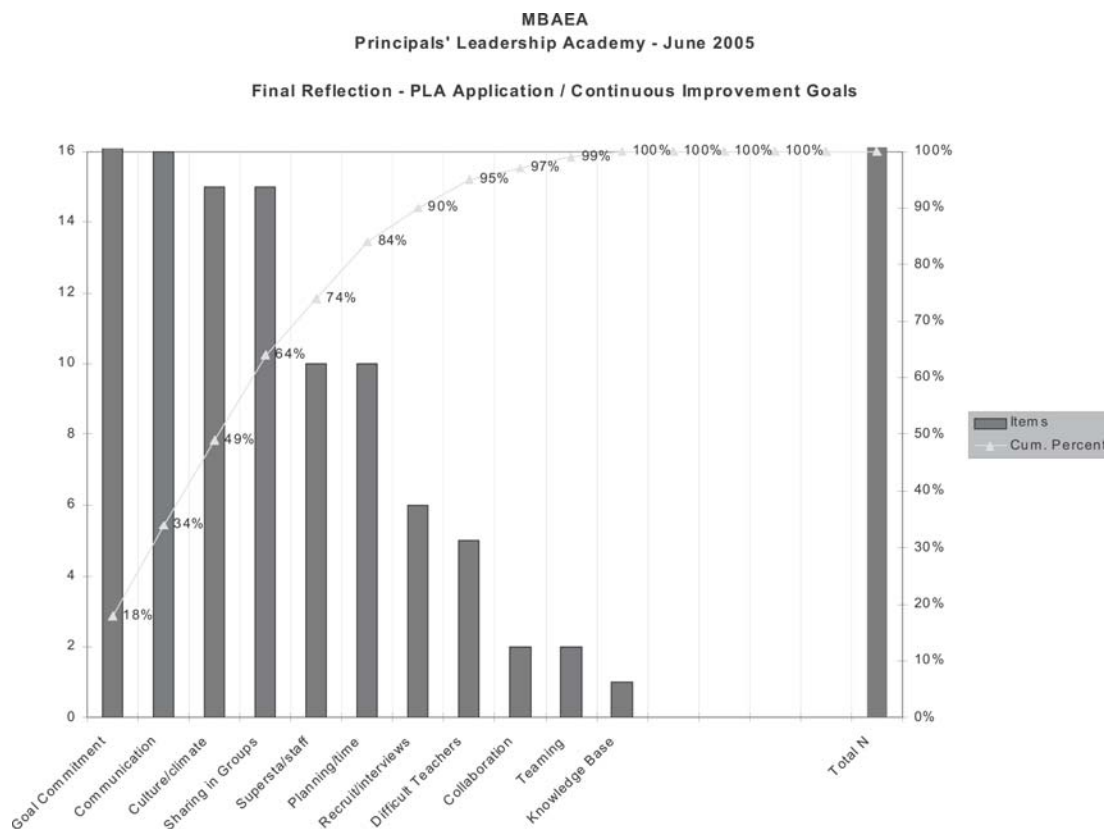


Figure 1. Application—Continuous Improvement Goals.

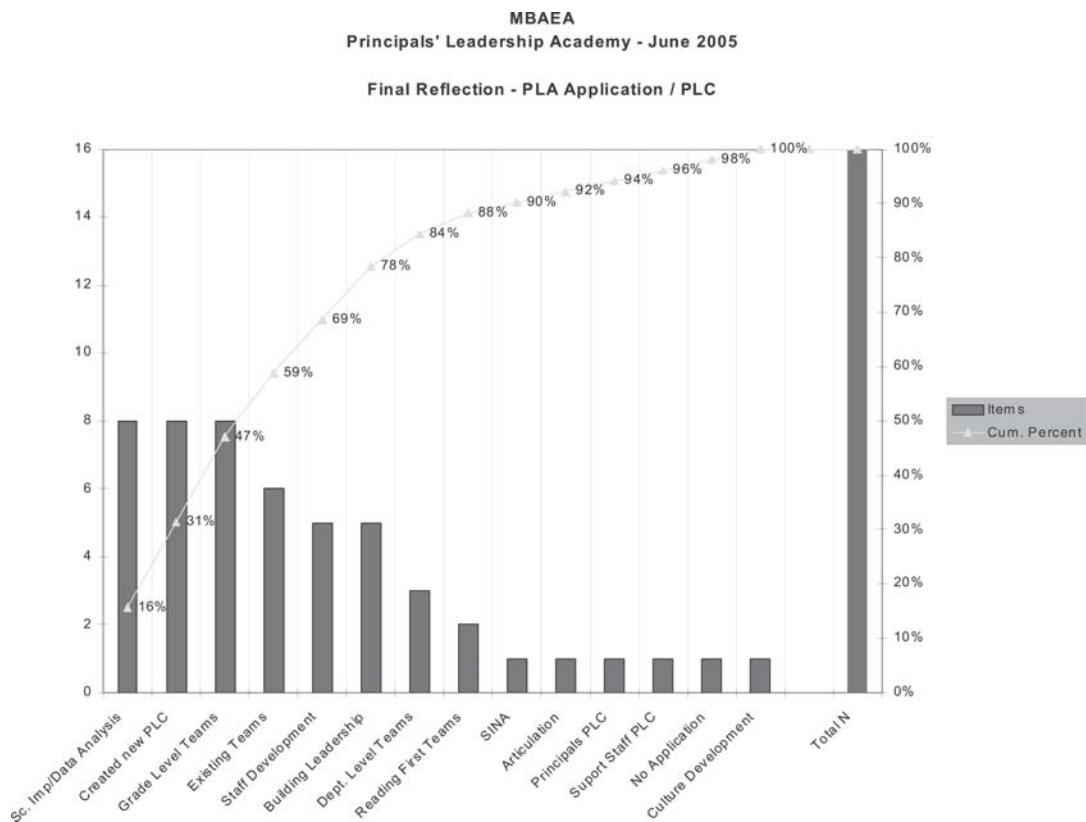


Figure 2. Application—Professional Learning Communities.

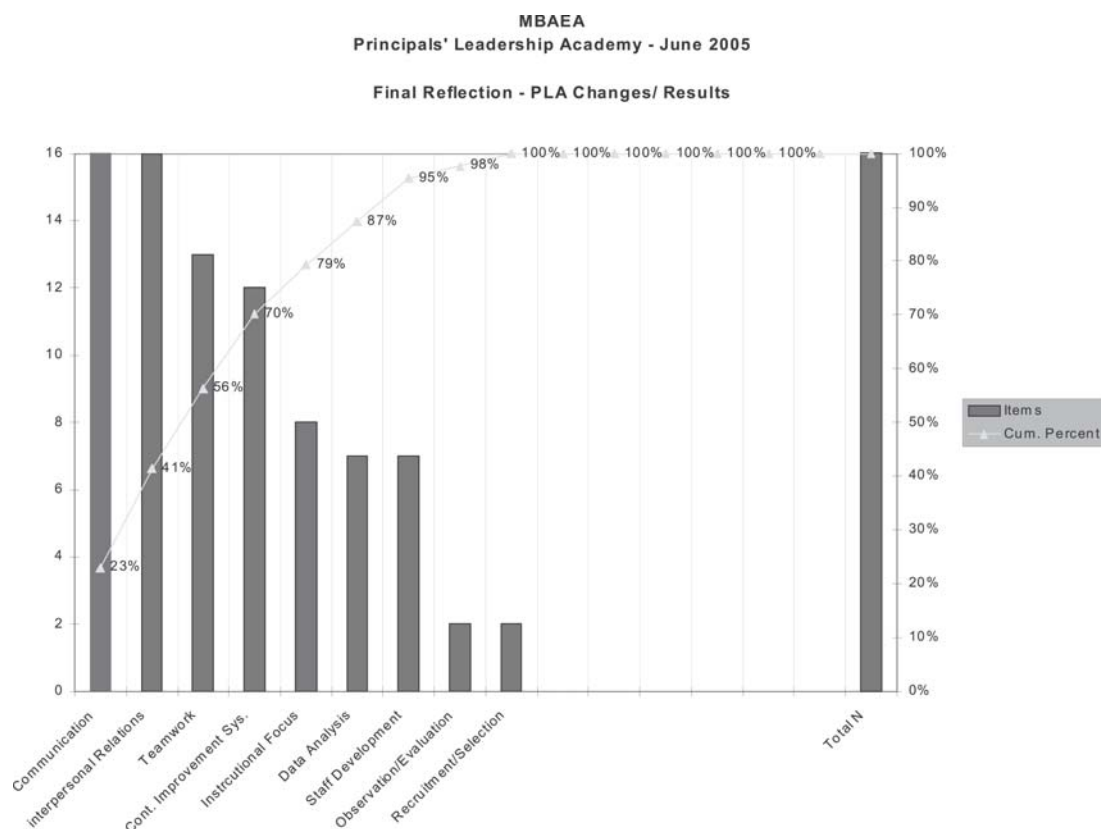


Figure 3. Application—State and Local Initiatives.

Case Study Data

The self perception survey (PICS Leadership Survey) used for the principals self-rating of their leadership skills was administered to the case study subjects in the fall and spring of the in-service series. The data collected from this self-perception survey was combined with interview data. The results revealed that the principals' self-evaluation indicated growth in a number of leadership criteria. This growth, while it cannot be entirely attributed to PLA participation, certainly seems to be correlated positively with the activities presented and subsequent learning from the PLA. The data included in Table 3 captures each of the PICS criteria and the percentage of research subjects who either improved, declined or stayed the same in their ratings from Fall 2004 to Spring 2005.

Case Study Interview Results

Themes

Outcome 10.1: Communicates High Expectations for Self and for Teachers and Students

Setting the expectations for faculty and students is a fairly routine part of school administration. However, after the training that Dr. Whitaker provided, several of the subjects used the Friday Focus to highlight positive elements of the school. This included sharing expectations on a variety of issues such as professional development, student behavior and parent contacts. Several of the subjects who were using the Eight Step Continuous Improvement Process noted the use of test talks to enhance student engagement on ITBS. Surveys, including the Climate Survey offered through PLA, were cited as means to collect data and enhance communication. There was also carryover in improving trust because of renewed or different efforts to enhance communication, both with certified and support staff. In the end, the subjects felt more confident of their skills in this area.

Table 3. PICS Criteria Ratings.

Criteria	Improved	Declined	Same
10.1 Communicate high expectations	25%	0%	75%
9.1 Build school culture of trust	59%	8%	33%
2.2 Culture supports Cont. Improvement	59%	8%	33%
8.1 Applies change process in planning	42%	25%	33%
4.3 Engage teachers in decision making	42%	16%	42%
5.3 Evaluation and professional development	50%	8%	42%
13.1 Prioritizes activities and time	59%	8%	33%
1.4 Create learning community	42%	8%	50%

Outcome 9.1: Builds a school culture that is characterized by trust

Several subjects indicated that the PLA instruction on trust and culture issues was helpful. They used the School Culture Survey results to identify areas of strength and concern for their own buildings (and in comparison to others) and shared the results with faculty. There was mention of a renewed sense of treating all staff, students and parents with respect. One of the key contributions to working better with faculty was the presentation on working effectively with the “Backbones, Mediocres and Superstars” (Whitaker, 1999). Developing staffing patterns that help support faculty members in addressing student achievement issues was mentioned as well. In the end, the subjects felt more confident of their skills in this area.

Outcome 2.2: Creates a school culture that supports continuous improvement.

By far the greatest number of “change issues” shared was related to student achievement and specifically on improving test scores (ITBS and other measures). The principals had created or added to teams the responsibility of looking at data, results and changing instruction. The teams were also looking at data and using the IPDM model to improve classroom practices, professional development, instructional schedules and other systems. Principals used the Instructional Practices Inventory developed at the University of Missouri and other measures to look at engagement issues. Several principals cited their No Child Left Behind—Schools in Need of Assistance plan as an important means to focus improvement efforts. In the end, the subjects felt more confident of their skills in this area.

Outcome 8.1: Applies knowledge about the change process when planning and implementing school-based professional learning.

The strongest theme of subjects’ responses was the intersection of workshop instruction about the change process (both systems and people) and the application of professional learning community type structures. The subjects reported getting their school professional learning communities to engage in the change process and assist the principals in identifying priorities and the direction for the process. Managing mandates and the increasing number of initiatives from the district was a challenge. Several acknowledged the power of the aligning the CSIP, Building Plan and the change process. The emphasis placed on collaboration in the sessions on IPDM carried over into the results on this outcome. Several principals reported a decline in their perception of performance in this area. The interviews revealed that some subjects realized that their knowledge of the change process was not as deep as they reported in the fall self assessment and interviews.

Outcome 4.3: Engages teachers, parents and community members in data-driven decision making

The response to this outcome was relatively weak in the fall interviews on this topic; there was limited in-

struction and emphasis placed on this outcome during the training. A number of new building leadership teams included a parent representative. Strengths on this outcome existed before the PLA training.

Outcome 5.3: Designs and conducts effective formative and summative evaluation of teachers and provides guidance to accessing appropriate professional development.

The development and/or implementation of the Iowa Teaching Standards and Teacher Evaluation System were key elements in the principals' planning and execution of teacher evaluation processes. The individual teacher growth plans were being aligned with the CSIP and the Building Plan (if created). There was a much stronger emphasis on aligning professional development activities to produce desired student achievement results. Principals indicated that the observation calendar introduced by Dr. Whitaker was very useful for communication and in becoming more consistent with classroom visitations. There were several subjects who mentioned collaborative discussion of lesson plans in teams to improve instruction and to document team activity. In the end, the subjects felt more confident of their skills in this area.

Outcome 13.1: Effectively prioritizes the activities and time of the school community to meet building level goals

There was minimal emphasis placed on time management in the PLA workshops and a great deal of emphasis placed on setting priorities for goals and school wide initiatives. Subjects reported that they were delegating more (through the use of teams) to manage the work-load and time. Most of them stated that the demands on their professional time were difficult to balance with demands in their personal lives. They understand this is part of the position but they seem to be looking for additional ways to balance things. Several cited using Covey principles to achieve this. In the end, the subjects felt more confident of their skills in this area.

Outcome 1.4: Creates and maintains a learning community to support teacher and student learning

The application of professional learning community principles and/or collaborative teams was a strong theme across many of the outcomes. Not only did the workshops include instruction in these areas, but there was a high level of commitment to collaboration inherent in the IPDM process being rolled out across the state. The structure of in-service and the scheduling of dates within the districts to apply the IPDM model seemed to be altered often during the course of this school year. In the end, the subjects felt more confident of their skills in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The selection and design of the workshop content and the assessment tools used to measure the effectiveness of the professional development series was drawn from the National Staff Development Council Standards. This best practice information was used to design the self-assessment and interview protocol instruments for data collection.

The research design, used to evaluate effectiveness of the PLA, triangulated data from participants' final reflections, pre and post interviews and self- assessments.

2. The major themes of principal and school leadership development reflected in the data were:
 - A. Principals improved in their commitment to and communication of high expectations for student and staff.
 - B. Communication systems and practices improved.
 - C. New and improved team configurations were employed using the IPDM to create a culture of continuous improvement. Principals also started employing the concept of distributed leadership with their faculties.
 - D. Principals worked on creating, and in many cases achieved, a school culture of trust.

- E. Principals were more confident in their knowledge of the change process when implementing school based professional learning (PLC).
 - F. The weakest areas of practice were in time management and in improving parent involvement in decision-making.
3. The data collected on the effectiveness of the design and delivery of the 2004-05 PLA reflected strong support by the participants. The principals were overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of the applicability and timeliness of the content of the workshops. In addition, the satisfaction surveys reflected high satisfaction with the quality of the workshops. They also reported that they applied many of the lessons learned in improving their administrative practice and building operations. In a number of the study participants' self ratings, they actually rated themselves higher in their level of expertise and leadership behaviors as a result of the training.

This professional development design for practicing principals was effective because it was based on best practices of adult learning theory and incorporated job embedded applications of lessons learned.

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The P–12 Educational Administration Best Practices Improvement Spiral Model

Joseph Pacha and Lynne Curry

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 25 years there has been increasing concern among educational administrators and related professional organizations about the lack of relevance, or the disconnect, between what is taught in administrative preparation programs and actual administrator practice in P–12 schools (Young, Peterson, & Short, 2002). Numerous studies have called for the reform of educational administration and leadership preparation programs. Much of this call for reform has been aimed at state and national policy or similar agendas for which professors of educational administration and leadership do not have direct control or application in the classroom. However, there are elements that can and must be implemented immediately to demonstrate working toward meaningful reform accomplishments. It is ultimately these accomplishments that will impact the real purpose of preparation programs—improved P–12 student learning.

This paper explains how the last 20 years of reform efforts in educational administration preparation programs can serve as a solid foundation for applying the Best Practices Improvement Spiral model as a practical approach to raising the effectiveness of school leaders and the achievement level of P–12 students. This model can be tested against two decades of educational administration preparation calls for reform initiatives and meet their tests. This model is readily available and can have enduring positive and practical implications for both preparation programs and the P–12 practitioners that they serve.

CRITIQUING EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS

Calls for reform in educational administration preparation programs are nothing new. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 1989) produced a report entitled *Improving the Preparation of School Administrators: The Reform Agenda*. The report called for multiple changes to the typical preparation program. These included improving the curriculum by grounding it in the problems of current practice, and establishing and maintaining long-term formal relationships between school districts and universities for clinical study, field residency, and applied research.

Since the publication of the NPBEA report, other critics have weighed in, suggesting program improvements. Andrews (1994) pointed out that “we must change the process by which [students] are educated, from the ‘sit and get,’ isolated, course-driven treatment to an academically and practice intensive program based on critical inquiry” (p. 215). Murphy (2001) argued that preparation programs deserve criticism for “focusing on the academic dimensions of the profession to the near exclusion of actual practice” (p. 14).

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL, 2002) convened a Task Force on School Leadership that highlighted the perceived chasm between researchers and practitioners. “Many studies by states and national organizations in recent years argue that traditional educational administration programs throughout the nation are too removed from the realities of schools and effective practice” (p. 9).

The most recent report, *Educating School Leaders* (Levine, 2005) recommends that “the current grab bag of

courses that constitutes preparation for a career in educational leadership must give way to a relevant and challenging curriculum designed to prepare effective school leaders” (p. 66).

In summary, recommendations for improving the preparation of schools leaders have consistently focused on strengthening the link between theory and practice, and embedding both firmly within thoughtful and rigorous preparation programs based on current and relevant research.

STANDARDS FOR CHANGE

Closely following the national movement to establish student learning standards in the early 1990s and in response to growing criticism of preparation programs, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) was formed in 1996 by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), bringing together 32 educational agencies and 13 educational administration associations to provide their own standards framework for school leadership based upon the qualities and capabilities deemed necessary for school leaders. The consortium considered its work to be “part of a long tradition of regularly upgrading the profession” (CCSSO, 1996 p. 6). The purpose of the standards was to ensure that preparation programs concentrate on key skills and knowledge essential for successful school administrators.

The ISLLC standards are summarized as follows: a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by (1) facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning; (2) advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student and staff growth; (3) ensuring management of the organization for a safe and effective learning environment; (4) collaborating with faculty and community, responding to diverse interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; (5) acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and (6) understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (CCSSO, 1996).

Murphy (2002) argued that “the ISLLC standards are an empirically-based set of values that go a long way in redefining the field of school administration” (p.6). They get preparation programs back to the basics of the business—teaching and learning—while also focusing on another significant element for schools today, school improvement.

In January of 2002, the NPBEA, on behalf of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), created *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership for Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, and Supervisors*. As the main accreditation body for university education programs, NCATE put the ISLLC standards and an additional NPBEA internship standard to use in evaluating preparation programs.

THE RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing the many calls for the reform of preparation programs in the last 20 years, it is clear that only four recommendations fall directly within the power of preparation program faculty to implement. Of the recommendations that came from the NPBEA 1989 report, only the two related to curriculum and partnerships could be implemented by preparation program faculty. Because the ISLLC standards were infused into the NCATE standards, the package of ISLLC/NCATE standards serves as a requirement for preparation program faculty and is within the realm of faculty implementation. And last, the coursework reform recommendation is an item for faculty to address (Levine, 2005).

In summary then, there are elements in the call for reform literature that preparation faculty hold within their power that would truly guide them toward greater improvement. From the perspective of preparation program faculty, it is possible to envision and create a manageable set of actions for improving practice and creating positive impacts on P–12 schools by concentrating on the four key reform elements identified above for program improvement implementation:

1. ground the curriculum in both sound theory and in real problems of current practice (NPBEA, 1989);
2. establish long-term formal relationships between school districts and universities for clinical study, field residency, mentorships and applied research (NPBEA, 1989);

3. incorporate the ISLLC/NCATE standards in daily teaching and learning in classes (ISLLC, 1996, and NCATE, 2002); and
4. assure that preparation courses are comprised of relevant, coherent and challenging curriculum to prepare effective school leaders (Levine, 2005).

To maximize the effectiveness of these four elements, we would add a fifth essential component:

5. infuse P–12 best practice research throughout the preparation curriculum.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES

Effective Schools Research

A quarter-century ago, the so-called “effective schools movement” was in high gear. It set the stage for conducting research that could document effective practices in schools facing learning challenges. Many of the lessons gathered at that time remain viable. The primary components identified in effective schools research may be outlined succinctly as: “(1) principal leadership and attention to the quality of instruction; (2) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; (3) an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (4) teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery; and (5) the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation” (Edmonds, 1982, p. 4). Space limitations here render us unable to cite all the subsequent research that has verified and reverified these essential school components; however, they continue to undergird qualitative research into school success (Taylor, 2002).

Of particular interest to practitioners in preparation programs is the emphasis on the component addressing the principal’s instructional leadership. In fact, the term “instructional leadership” was first coined within the effective schools research movement and has now become entrenched throughout preparation programs and standards (Hallinger, 2005). Instructional leaders have been described as school turnaround experts, creators of positive school cultures, designers of goals related to student achievement, and competent school managers (Hallinger, 2005).

Best Practice Studies

The authors of this article currently lead the Illinois Best Practice School Study in conjunction with the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), based at the University of Texas at Austin. This multi-year, multi-state study seeks to identify and analyze the best practices of schools across the United States that are considered to be consistent high performers despite significant poverty levels. The Illinois study (underwritten by the Illinois Business Round Table and Illinois State University) identifies common features and best practices of schools with consistently high achievement based on three years of state test scores, and a minimum poverty level of 20%. The study is organized within five themes (Curriculum, Staffing, Instruction, Monitoring and Rewards/Interventions) based on the large body of effective schools research, and across three levels of organization (district, school and classroom). The Illinois Best Practice School Study Framework, derived from empirical qualitative analysis, is both a product of the research and the basis for subsequent analysis of new best practice school sites (See Appendix, Figure A). Each of the 15 cells of the Framework is linked to in-depth descriptions of the best practices observed across sites. These were derived through cross-case analysis using established qualitative methods. One example from the Illinois Best Practice Study Framework is from the district level, using the theme: Staff Selection, Leadership & Capacity Building. The theme addresses recruitment, development and support for strong instructional leaders and highly capable teachers. The following six components of the district level staffing theme describe the best practices evidence:

1. Recruitment and hiring: the exemplary district places an extremely high priority on seeking and hiring highly qualified personnel. Often, student teachers, interns and substitutes with a track record of excellence and strong credentials receive preference in the hiring process.

2. Mentoring: mentoring for both teachers and principals is a well-established practice. New teachers receive intensive support from both formal mentors and through informal collegial interactions.
3. Professional development: the exemplary district supports and finds resources for ongoing professional development. This does not become a “frill” when budgets are tight. Professional training is based on student needs as determined from detailed and ongoing data analysis.
4. Partnerships: the district taps expertise from partners including colleges, universities and regional education offices, seeking both topical training and ongoing consulting relationships.
5. Internal advancement: in-house experts are highly valued and supported as collegial trainers. Internal advancement to leadership positions is encouraged and supported as appropriate with district funds and other resources.
6. Staff turnover: the result of highly professional staffing practices is that staff turnover is extremely low and a large pool of applicants is available for any job opening. This is true even if the district does not pay the highest salaries within the geographic region.

In addition to documenting and analyzing how the schools operate within and across the five thematic components, the study also focuses on the overall context and environment of the sites. Findings from this part of the study reveal important attributes of effective school and district leadership, including (a) establishing an atmosphere of genuine caring and support for both students and adults; (b) creating a pervasive ethos of trust, accountability and shared leadership; and (c) sparking a self-sustaining energy that fuels extraordinary effort on the part of both staff and students.

To gather data, faculty researchers organize site visits to the schools and their district offices, and conduct in-depth interviews with administrators and teachers at each level. They produce case studies supplemented with documentary evidence from the best practice school sites. The data are published nationally on the Just for the Kids website sponsored by NCEA (<http://just4kids.org>).

Another key attribute of the Illinois Best Practice School Study is its overall design of collaboration. Just as the best practice school sites exhibit a collaborative synergy among administrators, teachers and students, so does the study’s design create the same synergy among faculty, departments, and their students. Faculty researchers represent all three departments within the College of Education at Illinois State University: Educational Administration & Foundations, Curriculum & Instruction, and Special Education. Collectively, these faculty members teach both aspiring administrators and aspiring teachers. This provides an exceptional application opportunity to infuse their best practices research findings into their leadership preparation curricula. In addition, doctoral students participate as secondary researchers for the school site visits, as do National Board Certified Teachers from across the state. To date, one dissertation proposal based on the Illinois study has been approved in the Educational Administration program. The research initiative is making a concerted effort to emulate the best practice collaborative staff practices we are finding in the exemplary P–12 schools.

THE P–12 EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION BEST PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT SPIRAL MODEL

Schools often operate as isolated entities where neither teachers nor administrators receive any systematic opportunities to visit other districts, schools, and classrooms to see best practices that are occurring in the region and state around them. Similarly, many university faculty members conduct research in isolation. When sharing occurs, for both P–12 and university faculty practitioners, it is often in the formal atmosphere of a conference, symposium or workshop. How will university preparation faculty know the nature of these effective practices and the issues involved in their implementation? How, then, can university preparation faculty facilitate the comprehension and adoption of best practices by P–12 district administrators, school leaders, teachers, and fellow preparation program faculty? How can knowledge in all of these areas better serve the students of P–12 educators and administrators?

Our P–12 Educational Administration Best Practice Improvement Spiral model sheds new light on how the research-practice link may be productively strengthened. When professors of preparation programs become in-

volved with consistently effective schools and study their best practices, this new learning can be shared with the aspiring leaders in their preparation courses. These new school leaders can, in turn, apply this new knowledge to create better practices in their own schools. As these new leaders enter the field, a mentoring arrangement between the candidates and the faculty in preparation programs should be established, in order for the candidates to remain focused on the learning attained in the program and for continuous learning on the job.

Maintaining strong networks between best practice administrators, recent program graduates, and preparation program faculty can foster a focus for continued research. This research allows the program to maintain not only a strong connection to problems of actual practice, but also to advance an avenue for continuous improvement for both P-12 and preparation program faculty. This cyclical process, or “Best Practice Improvement Spiral,” (see Figure 1) will continually expand the number of schools successfully applying and honing best practices, increase the number of leaders improving their schools, broaden the collaborative learning and research by preparation program faculty and best practice administrators, and ultimately increase learning and achievement for P-12 students.

When university preparation programs document and then utilize best practices from real school districts, everyone wins. The best practice schools are validated and affirmed for their work. University personnel understand the best practices of P-12 schools, which they in turn incorporate in the preparation of future administrators. These new administrators will not only have a menu of best practices in their toolkits, but also they can contact districts using certain best practices, directly study their processes, and enter into mentoring relationships with best practice school leaders. Through this model, new administrators will be prepared to improve their schools. The following table describes the key features of the Best Practice Improvement Spiral model:

To use this model, university faculty members need to enter the field of best practices, study them, and infuse best practice research into their curriculum and teaching. The following example demonstrates how a preparation program faculty member would use the best practices example provided in Table 1, with the Theme: Staff selection, Leadership & Capacity Building (recruitment, development, and support of strong instructional leaders and highly capable teachers). If the preparation program taught a superintendent preparation course that included the topic of hiring and retaining effective principals, the relevant qualitative data and artifacts gathered from the best practices sites would be shared with the aspiring superintendents. Examples of these best practices would be: methods to attract and hire highly qualified principals; a well-developed and designed principal mentoring program; examples of support and resources for principal professional development; studies of partnerships for expertise with universities or colleges; methods for encouragement of and support for advancement; and techniques to maintain low levels of staff turn-over. The preparation students in turn use these best practices upon returning to their districts or when hired as new administrators in new districts.

University professors who prepare principals would use the best practices in coursework to prepare principals in much the same manner. Following the Table 1 example, the best practices would include: methods to attract and hire highly qualified teachers; examples of well-developed and designed teacher mentoring programs; methods of support and resources for teacher professional development; studies of partnerships for expertise with universities or colleges; methods for encouragement and support for advancement; and techniques to maintain low levels of staff turn-over.

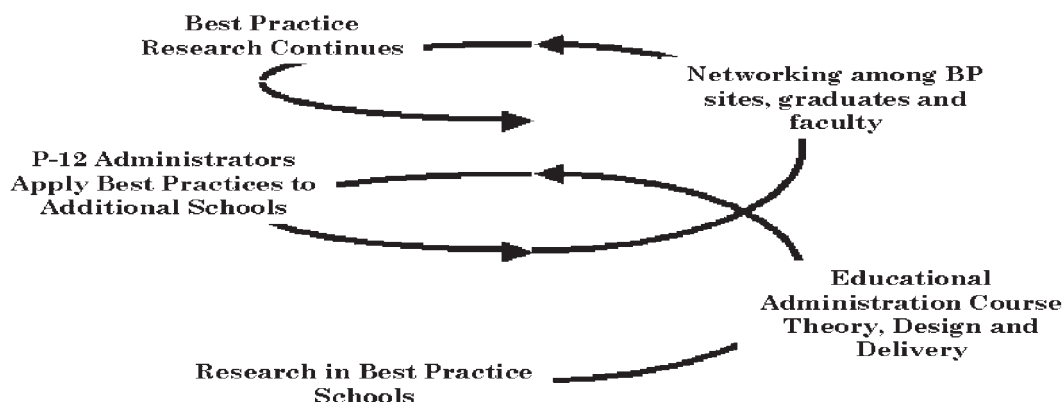


Figure 1. The P-12 educational administration best practice improvement spiral model.

Table 1. Key features of the best practice improvement spiral model.

Key Model Feature	Description
Qualitative Research in Best Practices Schools	NCEA Best Practices research is compiled and submitted to NCEA for inclusion on the Just 4 Kids web site for use by all faculties and students. This framework allows for research and learning in five effective schools themes—Curriculum, Staffing, Instruction, Monitoring and Rewards/Interventions—at three levels (district, school, and classroom).
Educational Administration Course Design and Delivery	Preparation Program faculties include the Best Practices research gathered for the NCEA framework into their classes i.e. faculty integrate theory with the best practices found in their research on “staff selection” into their classes on hiring staff or include their research on “interventions and adjustments” in classes that address improvement planning.
P–12 Administrators Apply Best Practices to Additional Schools	Educational leadership students in preparation programs who have been taught the best practices bring the best practices to their school districts. Furthermore, these students may choose to study various aspects of their school for improvement using the best practices framework with help from university faculty.
Networking Among BP Sites, Graduates and Faculty	Graduates who attain leadership positions enter into a mentoring contract or partnership with the university to continue to study best practices in the graduate’s district; both continue to learn together.
Best Practice Research Continues	NCEA Best Practice research continues to be conducted by university faculty. Faculty work directly with specific new schools to study their best practices, document their work, and learn their methods to impact student achievement.

Further, the Best Practices Improvement Spiral model includes an informal mentoring program, consisting of university faculty and best practice administrators serving as mentors to support newly prepared graduates as they join their colleagues in the field. Processes are currently being developed to establish a variety of vehicles for mentoring interaction, including annual symposia, a moderated on-line issues forum, and direct personal interaction among best practice school leaders, new school leaders, and preparation program faculty.

The mentoring component, with its real-time access to needed information and expertise, could offer new educational administration leaders a much greater chance of success as they start out their administrative careers. The schools where the new leaders apply the understandings they gain will benefit from both the best practice research and the mentoring network. This interaction of scholarly research, administrative teaching and learning, and on-site dissemination and practice is cyclical in nature and will continue to improve over time. It creates a tight coupling of collaboration across school and university sectors.

The value of this work to educational administration professors and practitioners alike is that the model, framework, and practices establish direct links between the “real world and work of the schools” and the classrooms of preparation programs. That link, as described earlier, has often been questioned because most preparation program personnel have not served actively (or recently) in P–12 schools and do not understand their problems and issues. When preparation program faculty work directly and in a sustained manner to conduct research with schools and their personnel, real issues and real solutions are analyzed, understood, and then translated into classroom improvements. “University preparation programs must recognize that the leaders they train will have a direct impact on the achievement of P–12 students. Embracing and expanding opportunities for partnering with P–12 schools should not only improve achievement for P–12 students, but enrich university preparation programs as well” (Barnett, 2004, p. 127). This is the job of preparation programs: to effectively educate students about theory, and in turn help students analyze how theory can be best implemented in their real world.

WILL THE BEST PRACTICES IMPROVEMENT SPIRAL MODEL MEET THE TESTS?

Early in this paper we proposed that the Best Practices Improvement Spiral Model would meet the tests of several reform initiatives and standards that university faculty have at their immediate disposal. How would the model meet the five items identified as those being within the grasp of preparation program faculty?

1. Ground the curriculum in theory and real problems of current practice (NPBEA, 1989).

The model has as its base current theory. However, theory needs context to make sense and this model would allow administrators to connect theory to real practice. Through the use of the model in which preparation program faculty conduct research in school settings, current theories could be validated, pushed forward or changed as new research findings from the field. This new research would be available immediately to the students of the preparation programs who in turn could use of it in an immediate and useful fashion in their schools.

2. Establish relationships between school districts and universities for clinical study, field residency, mentorships and applied research (NPBEA, 1989).

The Best Practices Improvement Spiral model should build connections and relationships of school districts and universities for field work, mentorships, and applied research. By using the Best Practices research framework as a connecting link for university and school personnel, all parties could learn and work together. Because learning is as much a socially shared undertaking as it is an individually constructed enterprise, this connection of people learning together should generate a powerful collaboration for success.

3. Incorporate ISLLC/NCATE standards in daily teaching and learning in classes (ISLLC, 1996, and NCATE, 2002).

Preparation program faculties continually link the ISLLC standards with the preparation of their curriculum, the assessments that they use, and the data they collect to demonstrate the attainment of the standards by their students. In much the same manner, The Best Practices Improvement Spiral model could connect the best practices of P-12 educators and administrators to the standards as powerful examples of how the standards are made real and alive in the schools.

4. Assure that preparation courses are relevant, coherent and challenging in preparing effective school leaders (Levine, 2005).

The Best Practices Improvement Spiral model could bring together the best that preparation programs have to offer, the best practices of P-12 schools, and combine them into a learning environment where professors and students use them to learn together. Such an environment would be challenging, coherent, relevant, and exciting for both the faculty and learner.

5. Infuse P-12 best practice research throughout the preparation curriculum.

Too much time is spent reinventing the wheel in education. Real schools that are successful have solved the same problems other schools are still struggling to overcome. With a clear methodology for systematically documenting and analyzing best practices, this knowledge could become accessible, and thus become essential learning for administrative preparation students. Continued research should provide current and relevant understandings that could potentially accelerate the successful performance of preparation program graduates, their staffs and students.

Does the Best Practices Improvement Spiral model meet the tests? Undoubtedly, and the promise this models holds needs to be tested in reality. The model is founded on each of these reform initiatives and standards and will not only meet the tests, but also could be expanded beyond the components presented in this paper. For example, the model could be applied to teacher preparation and teacher-leader preparation programs. The model is adaptable as a continuous improvement model that could grow with change as it occurs, continually addressing the changing and context specific needs of schools and learners.

CONCLUSION

State and federal accountability requirements have become more stringent, causing greater urgency for P-12 students to be academically well-prepared for both college and new types of future work. In higher education,

the call for reforming preparation programs is accelerating as well. There is no better time to prove that we know how to prepare our students in leadership preparation programs for the new challenges they will face than by deeply connecting academic teaching, theory, and research to real practice in the field. Preparation program faculty members do not have to wait for changes to come from university program edicts, reforms or policy mandates; they have at least five initiatives within their purview to implement immediately:

- ground the curriculum in both sound theory and in real problems of current practice;
 - establish long-term formal relationships between school districts and universities for clinical study, field residency, mentorships and applied research;
 - incorporate ISLLC/NCATE standards in daily teaching and learning in classes; and
 - assure that preparation courses comprise a relevant, coherent and challenging curriculum to prepare effective school leaders.
- infuse P–12 best practice research throughout the preparation curriculum.

The Best Practice Improvement Spiral model offers logical and practical solutions for meeting the intent of these reforms while helping to solve the problems facing schools. It has the potential to make a synergistic connection between the university and P-12 education leaders. The infusion of documented best practices that produce sustained improvements in student learning grounds preparation programs in research derived directly from successful schools. Linking universities, administrator preparation programs, administrator candidates, schools, and student achievement together in a continuous improvement spiral of best practices creates a win-win situation for everyone.

APPENDIX

Illinois Best Practice Study Framework

Illinois Best Practice Study 2005
Revised Framework

Organizing Themes	District Level	School Level	Classroom Level
Overview	Create district vision	Create opportunities	Use collegial prob-
Context of the school	for continuous im-	for students to become	lem-solving to maxi-
School climate	provement supported	capable, positive and	mize student achieve-
Learning environment	by stakeholders.	productive learners.	ment.
Relationships within district (administrators, teachers, students) and with stake- holders			
Curriculum & Academic Goals	Adopt standards, align	Foster collaborative	Design classroom
Presence and development of	curriculum and assess-	efforts to prioritize im-	practices which cus-
a written curriculum and aca-	ments, and set goals	plement and revise	tomize curriculum and
ademic goals	for improving student	curriculum and assess-	assessments for each
Alignment with state stan-	performance.	ments.	student.
dards			
Staff Selection, Leadership & Capacity Building	Recruit, develop and	Mentor new teachers;	Collaborate to in-
Recruitment, selection & al-	support strong instruc-	continuously support	crease knowledge and
location of staff	tional leaders and	and develop teacher	improve instructional
Staff retention	highly capable teach-	effectiveness.	practice.
Professional development	ers.		

(continued)

Organizing Themes	District Level	School Level	Classroom Level
Instructional Programs, Practices & Arrangements Providing sound instructional programs Using effective instructional practices Modifying instruction	Provide re-search-based instructional programs that reflect best practice.	Select instructional programs and methods that recognize the unique nature of each student.	Modify programs, practices and arrangements to maximize student achievement.
Monitoring: Compiling, Analyzing & Using Data Monitoring performance against district and school goals Monitoring individual students	Develop student assessment and data monitoring systems to support educational decisions.	Utilize data to revise curriculum and improve instructional methods.	Use a variety of assessment tools to measure student learning and inform practice.
Recognition, Intervention & Adjustments Recognizing academic success Recognizing other accomplishments Interventions for groups Individual interventions	Provide numerous opportunities to celebrate student success and provide student support as needed.	Recognize positive student performance and intervene based on identified student needs.	Recognize, intervene and adjust practice based on student attitudes, behaviors and performance.

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The Professional Development Needs of Practicing Principals

Pamela Salazar

INTRODUCTION

Of the seemingly endless lineup of problems schools face today, the critical need for strong, responsible, and enlightened leadership is of great concern. According to the recent report from the Institute of Educational Leadership (IEL, 2001), schools nationwide are grappling with serious problems ranging from record enrollment, school security, state-mandated accountability measures, the social and economic circumstances of students, staff shortfall, chronically low academic expectations for students, and a host of other difficult challenges. To add to the severity of the problems, there is scarcity of capable leaders. And, without topflight leadership, schools have little chance to meeting many of the challenges (IEL, 2001).

As increased accountability becomes the norm, leadership becomes more challenging and improved professional development for principals becomes more critical (Checkley, 2000; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001). Buckner (1997) stated that the professional development of administrators could well dictate the success and perhaps even the survival of schools in the twenty-first century. To be successful, schools must change to meet the new and more complex needs of their students. The responsibility for leading school change is assigned to the principal with the degree of success dependent on new knowledge and skills (Daresh, 1999). In today's complex world, in schools beset with new kinds of challenges, professional development is the key to that knowledge and those skills (Lewis, 1997; Elmore, 1999).

The consensus regarding the urgent need for successful schools dictates a need for perseverance in redesigning principal professional development for improved results. The role of a school leader is being transformed. A major report from the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000), "Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship," asserts that the role of the contemporary school principal is not at all what it has been historically and the schools of the 21st century require a new kind of principal. Principals may only hope to face these challenges if they are given the best possible professional development based on what they need to know and how they can best learn it. Clear delineation of the best practices of principal professional development can serve as a prescription for both universities and districts in their efforts to design quality programs to support and sustain high-performing principals.

Principals in today's schools need to assume new roles and develop new proficiencies. In order to understand how best to support practicing principals in these new roles, we must build new understandings of leadership development. This chapter will discuss the results of a study on the professional development needs of practicing principals and the implications for the development of best practice professional development activities that enhance the leadership skills that principals need to meet the demands of high stakes reform.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The educational challenge of the 21st century is to achieve higher levels of learning for all children. In their search for ways to improve school performance, educators and policymakers have addressed a broad array of challenges confronting schools. These approaches to improvement have included raising standards, strengthen-

ing teacher professional development, refocusing schools around the primary goal of student achievement, and holding schools accountable for results. But, according to the report from the National Staff Development Council (2000), “only one area of policy focus—strengthening school leadership – can exert control over all of these challenges simultaneously” (p. 1). Indeed, most education researchers would agree that school reform cannot succeed without vital leadership. Unfortunately however, according to the Education Commission of the States (ECS, 2000), “...one element has largely been ignored in the education reform movement: the competence of the people making decisions about the education of America’s students” (p. 1).

Inevitably, this has generated an unparalleled focus on leadership for public education. The cry on all fronts is for a redefinition of effective education leadership and a redesign of how we prepare and develop education leaders (ECS, 2000). School reform efforts and the increased demand for a new and different kind of leadership are generating a renewed interest in principal professional development programs and afford a unique opportunity for upgrading current professional development practices.

Administrator professional development has failed to keep pace with challenging times and changing expectations of school leaders (Lumsden, 1992; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Peterson, 2002). As a result, many districts are trying to restructure their programs to strengthen the leadership ability of their principals. The focus is on what can be done to bolster the skills and knowledge of principals already on the job that are, on average, 48 years old and nearly a decade past their original preparation for the job (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). The problem is intensified when you consider that the typical preparation program at that time separated educational administration from the “phenomenon known as instruction” and in fact had very little to do with education (Murphy & Forsyth, 1999, p. 20).

But that is only one part of the problem. There is a looming shortage of school leaders (Farcas, Johnson, Fuffett, Syat, & Vine, 2003). Research confirms there is a limited supply of talented candidates to lead schools. According to the Educational Research Service (ERS, 1999), nearly 40 % of all public school principals will retire or leave the position for other reasons before 2010. At the same time, the Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates the number of available jobs in school administration will grow 10 to 20 % (Institute for Educational Leadership [IEL], 2000, p.3). This means districts are expected to replace more than 60% of all principals over the next 5 years (IEL, 2000). As the need for principal leadership increases, the pool of qualified candidates is decreasing. This is occurring just as many are realizing the critical role of principals in bringing about systemic school improvement for increasing student achievement.

Societal conditions, forces, and actions are constantly reshaping the work of today’s principal (ERS, 2000). These changing conditions influence the performance of present day school leaders. To meet the educational challenges of the 21st century, everyone who affects student learning must continually upgrade his or her skills. The role of the principal in the school reform era is still emerging as teaching and learning move to the center of this new agenda. This view of the contemporary principal requires new skills and a new focus on the professional development activities that can deliver leaders who will improve student achievement.

Leadership and the Changing Role of the Principalship

Schools are changing. They are transforming in response to various pressures, including parent complaints about the quality of education, labor market demands for increasingly skilled workers, rapid advances in technology, and the growing popularity of public school alternatives such as charter schools and vouchers for public education (IEL, 2000). No one can say for certain how the new schools of the century will differ from those of the last century, but there is little doubt that these schools will require different forms of leadership.

Overviews of research on effective schools and leadership suggest that effective leadership in a school is critical for improving student achievement (Dunklee, 2000; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Leadership is a complex enterprise, and as recent studies assert, vision and collaboration for a shared vision are important characteristics of effective leadership. However, as the focus of schools change from teacher centered to student centered, and the role of the principal changes from manager to instructional leader in a learning community, there are special principal traits that are important to implementing successful school improvement efforts and promoting school change.

The literature on education leadership and school change recognizes clearly the role and influence of the principal on whether or not change will occur in the school (Murphy & Seashore-Louis, 1994; Fullan, 1991;

Louis & Miles, 1990). Increasingly, research on high performing schools reveals that these schools value change as a means of realizing increased effectiveness. In their research on improving the urban high school, Louis and Miles (1990) cite “the will and the skill” for change in a collegial professional learning community as the key to school improvement (p. 38). It seems clear that transforming the school organization into a learning community is highly dependent on the leadership of the principal and on the active nurturing of the entire staff’s development as a community. The principal and the staff become partners in education.

This new relationship forged between administrators and teachers leads to a shared and collegial leadership in the school, where all grow professionally and learn to view themselves as “all playing on the same team and working toward the same goal: a better school” (Hoerr, 1996, p. 381). Kleine-Kracht (1993) suggested that administrators, along with teachers, must be learners: “questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions for school improvement” (p. 393). The traditional pattern that “teachers teach, students learn, and administrators manage is completely altered” (Kleine-Kracht, p. 393). Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1997) reinforced these ideas, finding that in learning communities, principals treat teachers with respect and as professionals, and work with them as peers and colleagues.

In 1990, Peter Senge’s book *The Fifth Discipline*, though written for the business community, moved into the educational environment. Senge’s book and its description of learning organizations that might serve to increase organizational capacity and creativity caught the attention of educators struggling to plan and implement reform in the nation’s schools. The idea of a learning organization “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (p. 3) prompted new views of schools and school leadership.

In linking the school leadership role to the development of professional community, Louis and Kruse (1995) identified four issues:

First, principals must lead from the center. This requires that the principal positions himself/herself in the center of the staff rather than at the top and take advantage of every opportunity to stimulate conversation about teaching and learning, to bind the faculty around issues of students and instruction.

Second, the principal provides teachers with classroom support. It is clear that instructional leadership is a requirement of developing a community of professionals in which “increased cognitive understanding of instruction and learning and a more sophisticated repertoire of teaching skills are goals” (p. 212–213).

Third, leaders model the behaviors of a professional community, keeping the vision of such a workplace culture alive and visible

Fourth, the principal supports a culture of inquiry and the application of new knowledge as a high priority. Leaders champion the need for information and data so that staff can engage in discussions of “what is working and how do we know?” (p. 219). The principal supports and promotes action research by teachers as a means by which teachers consume and generate new knowledge.

In all research, a key factor in effective school reform and school change is the role of the principal. As the call for school improvement moves to the forefront of education priority, the job of the principal is becoming more complex. It requires new roles and new forms of leadership carried out under careful public scrutiny while simultaneously trying to keep day to day management on an even keel (Dunklee, 2000). This places principals as the center of the action. Considerable agreement in literature exists regarding the need to improve the leadership roles of the principal (e.g., Glickman, 1990; Togneri & Anderson, 2003; Hale & Moorman, 2003). However, a report from NCES (1997) showed that principal professional development programs are not effectively preparing principals to lead school improvement. In short, the demands placed on principals have changed, but the profession has not changed to meet those demands. This is a major disadvantage, as current principals find very little in their professional preparation or ongoing professional development to equip them for this new role (Berney, M. & Ayers, 1990; Elmore, 2000). According to Jacobson and Conway (1990), this new attention to administrative preparation generated the beginning of the third wave of reform.

There is a great need for additional information on professional development programs for experienced practicing principals for instructional leadership. It is evident that principals need additional information about the knowledge and skills required for their positions. The report, *Effective Leaders for Today’s Schools* (OERI, 1999), stressed that the professional development for administrators should “be based on a few core standards for which leaders should know and be able to do, with the chief standard being a deep understanding

of teaching, learning, and school improvement” (p. 7). New approaches to helping administrators grow and acquire new skills will require changes in content and delivery.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Successful educational reform and school improvement ultimately hinges on the leadership skills of the principal. If schools are to successfully confront the complexities of a changing society and improve teaching for students, then school leaders must be provided with professional development activities that improve their ability to lead school improvement. What follows are the perceptions of high school principals with regards to their professional development needs to lead school improvement. In addition, principals were asked how that professional development should be delivered. With greater insight into the professional development needs for practicing principals engaged in school improvement, a thoughtful course may be charted to develop quality opportunities for professional development.

Method

Data was collected from high school principals in the states who are served by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC) accreditation agency. These states are Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. These states were chosen due to their membership in the NASC, which now requires schools to document school improvement efforts for annual accreditation. High school principals within the identified states were contacted using the NASC membership directory. In order to determine what professional development learning opportunities are needed, a survey instrument based on the ISSLC standards was developed and validated. The questionnaire was designed to answer questions about the professional development needs of principals. It was divided into three sections: demographic professional profile, leadership skills and knowledge, and the preferred format for professional development.

In the first section, information about the independent variables pertaining to the participants' demographic characteristics was elicited. The second section consisted of 25 items which asked participants to rate their perceived level of professional development need in each leadership performance domain using four-point Likert-type scales. A higher rating indicated a greater perceived level of development need in each of the school improvement leadership areas. On the third part of the questionnaire respondents were asked to rate their preference for each of eight professional delivery methods using four-point Likert-type scales. A free-response and comment section provided an opportunity for respondents to add any additional information.

All 623 principals in the NASC region were mailed the *Principal Professional Development Needs* survey. Two weeks later, follow-up postcards were sent to 408 individuals who had not returned the survey. Of the 623 questionnaires mailed, 316 were returned (51%). Out of the 316 returned surveys, 17 principals responded online to the website and the remaining 299 principals returned the survey by mail.

Findings of the Study

From the responses of the participating high school principals, the results clearly indicated that they view the topics of Building Team Commitment and Creating a Learning Organization as the most important topics for future professional development activities. Data suggested that principals recognized the importance of their own professional knowledge and skills in these areas and that they understood their own responsibilities for addressing issues related to facilitating school improvement. The data suggested that principals recognized professional development in these domains would help them perform their primary duties as instructional leaders and organization developers for continuous school improvement. The areas of Managing the Organization and Operational Procedures and Organizing Resources were identified by principals as areas of least need for professional development. The data suggested that principals are concerned with the skills of leadership as compared to the skills of management. Principals clearly recognized the collaborative nature of school leadership and ranked areas of need for professional development in those areas that would assist them in developing a collaborative learning community.

There was a significant relationship identified between several demographic characteristics of the participat-

ing principals and areas of professional development needs. These characteristics were: (1) size of school district (2) school enrollment (3) administrative experience and (4) level of education.

In districts with less than 5000 students and districts with 20,000–49,999 students, the training area of Building Team Commitment was rated the highest. In districts with 5000–19,999 students and districts with 49,999–99,999 students, the professional development area of Setting Instructional Direction—Results Orientation was rated the highest need. In districts with more than 100,000 students, the professional development area of Understanding Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment was rated the highest need. These data suggested that in large districts there are more accountability issues and demands for demonstrated results. There is no clear consensus in districts smaller than 100,000 students; however, it is apparent that results orientation and accountability are factors in all school districts.

In schools with less than 200 students, the professional development areas of Communicating Effectively, Creating a Learning Organization, Building Team Commitment, Using Research and “Best Practices,” and Sustaining and Motivating for Continuous Improvement were rated the highest need. In all other school sizes, the professional development area of Building Team Commitment was rated the highest. Principals in all categories of years in administration reported the training area of Building Team Commitment as the area of most need for professional development.

Principals with a master’s degree reported the training area of Building Team Commitment as the area of most need. Principals with an educational specialist degree reported the training areas of Analyzing Data, Building Team Commitment, and Sustaining and Motivating for Continuous Improvement as the areas of most need for professional development. Principals with a doctorate reported the training area of Understanding Student Development and Learning as the area of most need for professional development. Principals who had completed degrees beyond the master’s level have been challenged to examine research through the requirements of their respective programs. Their selection of such topics as Analyzing Data and Understanding Student Development and Learning suggested their recognition of research-based, data-driven decision-making as critical to effective school improvement.

Principals had strong opinions regarding their preferred delivery system for professional development. They identified the delivery method of Conference/Seminar as the most desirable. Other preferred delivery methods identified were Workshop and Hands-on/Field-based. The least preferred professional development delivery areas were identified as Online/Self-paced and University coursework. These data suggested that principals are concerned with the amount of time away from the demanding responsibilities of their job and when participating in professional development, they want to (1) be held captive, i.e. attend a workshop or a conference for a short period of time and (2) get the information so that they can get back to their schools. The concern with time and the ongoing priorities of leading a school may also have been the reason few principals selected self-paced online professional development. This requires a self-modulated, self-paced time commitment. Unlike being held captive in a workshop, this is easy to postpone to some later date that may never happen when more pressing issues arise. Another factor that may have impacted the lack of interest in online professional development was the fact that the majority of the principals (55.7%) were over 50 years of age. Having not grown up in the midst of the technology era they may not be comfortable with this option. The lack of technology interest was also evidenced by the small percentage of principals who responded to the questionnaire via the website.

SUMMARY

The results of this research study illustrate that principals prefer activities that will help them develop their schools into learning organizations for school improvement. Principals articulated the need for high-quality professional development that enhance their knowledge and skills to assist them in establishing effective relationships with teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. Principals view this area as the most important leadership domain to the primary function of school improvement. They recognized that for effective organizational development and continuous improvement, they must build team commitment and collaborative relationships in order to create a positive learning community.

It should also be mentioned that because there were significant differences across demographic characteristics, the context of the school is noteworthy. Professional development must be idiosyncratic and based on the individual needs of the schools, districts, and states. One size does not fit all when designing professional devel-

opment programs. The uniqueness of the situational factors of schools must be considered.

These findings provide direction for the development of professional development activities that will enhance the leadership skills that principals need to guide school reform and reach higher standards of student achievement. Principals need continuous professional development opportunities that are research based and geared to support their effort toward school improvement and the development of positive learning communities (Evans & Mohr, 1999; Peterson, 2002). It is critical that the professional development be planned, long-term, embedded in their jobs, focused on student achievement and supportive of reflective practice (National Staff Development Council, 2000). The investment of time and resources for the planning of an effective professional development program to enhance the educational leadership skills of high school principals to lead schools which are focused on continual improvement will greatly impact the ultimate quality of education for our students. America's future is at stake and school districts across the country face the critical duty of helping leaders to grow.

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The Administrator Development Academy: Adding Intensity to the Preparation Program: The Next Step to Excellence

Ted A. Zigler, James Koschoreck and Steve McCafferty

The Administrator Development Academy, the gateway experience into the Masters/licensure program at the University of Cincinnati, represents an innovative design that is particularly appropriate to meet the challenge of preparing tomorrow's school administrators, while adding a level of intensity unique to preparation programs. The intensity derives from the six-week, all day summer schedule for the 40-plus participants, on summer scholarships, working with a team of instructors who are also practitioners in the field. The Academy involves a huge commitment on all sides: for the students, a very personal time and effort commitment; for the university, a large financial commitment; and for the districts, student support and mentoring.

In the 2003 NCPEA Yearbook, Mawhinney (2004) states that "critics have pointed to the incoherence and irrelevance of preparation programs" (p. 151) and continues that "many argue that there is a disconnect between what is taught in university preparation programs and what practitioners need to be able to do in their schools and school districts" (Cambron-McCabe, 1999; Tirozzi, 2001, p. 151). The Administrator Development Academy is one attempt, through an increased intensity in the program, to make the program relevant and to connect the preparation program with what is really happening with principals and their schools. Scholars at the university talk about improving the preparation programs and adding cohorts, but the large leap must come from the students and the universities working together to increase the time and the commitment of the experience with a solid blend of practitioners and university faculty to make it connect with the real world. The Academy and the subsequent coursework of the Masters program in Educational Leadership align very closely with Levine's (2005) template for high quality programs in school leadership, with the initial six-week experience of the Academy being a very important part of that.

The Administrator Development Academy trains future educational leaders to be prepared for "near-constant change in dealing with problems that are highly complex, often ill-understood, and ambiguous, and with outcomes that are uncertain" (Owens, 2004, p. 280). In practice, this means our students must be prepared to be "more participative, more collaborative in working with and through others because the old top-down bureaucratic ways of doing things no longer work in today's world" (Owens, 2004, p. xv). We believe that the Academy is an innovative preparation program designed on best practices and is built upon current research in the areas of adult learning theory, reflective practice, group development, and experiential learning (Zigler, Koschoreck, Allen, McCafferty, Tillman & Cook, 2005). The *Stanford School Leadership Study* (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005) cites little empirical research to determine the best methods for developing school leaders, but lists several that are frequently identified as being essential. The Academy has many of those features, such as problem-based learning, cohort programs, collaboration between university and school districts, and field-based internships, but the study states "the impact of these features is more likely to hinge on their quality, coherence, and implementation, than their existence" (p. 8-9). The intensity of the six-week program is a key to the quality and the implementation. And with no lag time during the six-week experience, the coherence of the delivery and curriculum is seamless.

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THE ACADEMY STRUCTURE

As described in the syllabus to the Administrator Development Academy, this particular set of introductory courses represents the initial experience in the educational leadership program. The Academy is the gateway to the Masters program, and licensure, in educational leadership at the University of Cincinnati for all principal-candidates. This induction experience is the first 15 quarter hours of the 60 quarter hour total required. It is an intense, all day, six week experience which introduces potential school leaders to the knowledge base, skills, attitudes, and values needed to become an educational leader. The Academy is a blend of interpersonal communication and the foundations of administration into a specially designed learning experience. The essence of the Academy is that the participants will learn, experience, and then model the processes and professional skills expected in learning centers of the future.

1. The Academy is an **EXPERIENCE** and not a set of courses. It cannot be duplicated or made up in any way. An analogy would be white-water rafting: (1) there is no getting off and back on again, (2) everyone is relying on each person to do his/her part, and (3) no one can survive by “doing one’s own thing.”
2. The Academy is **WHOLE AND INTERCONNECTED**. Students learn and refine skills and ideas the last day that were learned the first day. Every part of the Academy experience folds into and grows within every other part. The Academy requires a commitment to every event every day.
3. The Academy is a **LEARNING COMMUNITY**. It models the school of the future as a center of learning in an environment of changing demographics and accountability. It also becomes the basis of a network of professionals designed to provide ongoing support as these future leaders face the social, political, economic, and legal changes that affect public education.
4. The Academy is a journey of **PERSONAL LEARNING** and growth. Reflection and feedback make learning conscious. Thus, leadership for learning is a continuous action-and-reflection experience.

The following are the general stages of the six week learning experience of the Academy:

Week 1—Team building, problem solving, and the renewal of communication skills and process. Portfolio development and ELCC standards are introduced.

Week 2—Consensus process skills, exploration of present and future alternatives in education. Vision building. A description of the learning place of the future compared with the present.

Week 3—A study of the role of the educational leader for the learning place of the future. Principle-centered leadership. Organizational theory in education.

Week 4—Simulated experiences, situations (for example: diversity, angry parents, finance), case studies, role play, and reflective practice. Issues defined. Planning of the Master’s/licensure programs. Plans for continued personal growth and development. Research project (with literature review) introduced and developed.

Week 5—Inquiry team’s project plans. Inquiry teams complete study projects into issues of educational leadership in actual and current situations. Each inquiry incorporates craft knowledge, research knowledge, and theory. Each inquiry results in a public report to a school leader or a group identified by the school leader. Planning of Master’s/licensure programs. Research project, in small groups, completed.

Week 6—Assessing personal and professional growth. Acquiring and practicing general strategies that incorporate skills learned. Inquiry team project presentations. Closing celebration and reunion (alumni practitioner speakers, university speakers, and practitioner panel in conference format).

An important input for the students as they work through the six week process are books by Thomas Sergiovanni, Robert Owens, Warren Bennis, Roland Barth, Stephen Covey, Theodore Kowalski, Terrence Deal, and Kent Peterson. Also important are the personal inventory instruments that assess the students’ learning styles, leadership styles, and conflict management styles. What they learn about themselves, along with the sharing and reflection of their cohort’s many individual styles, enhances their understanding of the value of differences in schools. They also begin to learn how to use those differences to improve schools and improve leadership.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING THE ACADEMY

Based on current school needs, research indicates that the modern, innovative preparation programs will utilize certain methods and concepts to develop today's effective school leaders. Those methods and concepts, explained here, are the framework of the Administrator Development Academy of the University of Cincinnati.

Extensive use is made of the cohort model (LaPlant, Hill, Gallagher, & Wagstaff, 1989; Lauder, 2000), which creates a supportive network, while the individuals in the group learn from each other. The strengths of diverse opinions and backgrounds are allowed to develop, and then blend, to aid in the students' understanding of people and leadership. Adult learning methods (Daresh & Barnett, 1993; Milstein, 1993) are an instrumental part of making the cohort model work, allowing everyone to gain from the different experiences that are brought to the classroom. It is a hands-on, experiential, inquiry-based learning program.

Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on reflective practice (Daresh & Barnett, 1993; Lauder, 2000; Milstein, 1993) throughout the Academy which allows the participants to make meaning of the many varied experiences, simulations, activities, and readings. Adult development issues (Daresh & Barnett, 1993) offer ways to understand how guided reflection can support the development of cognitive structures to help individuals learn and grow from Academy experiences.

The idea of collaboration is modeled and experienced through team teaching (by the instructors) and group work by the students (Daresh & Barnett, 1993; LaPlant, Hill, Gallagher & Wagstaff, 1989; Murphy, 1992). Participants see the value and strength of groups working together rather than having to work alone in a difficult school leadership position, and they come to understand that "one cannot do this job alone." Hence, the value of the cohort model comes into play again.

Numerous studies reveal the value of developing skills through experiential learning such as simulations, role-play, interactive learning (Daresh & Barnett, 1993; Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 1999; Lauder, 2000; Milstein, 1993), such that both students and instructors find this an essential part of growth and development. The landscape of today's schools requires that a leader have the tools and people-skills to move schools forward on many fronts. The proper experiences, and reflection upon those experiences, result in students acquiring and developing skills while in a supportive, practice setting, before entering the field, where the climate might not be as supportive. The better programs also include more field-based experiences (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Kochan, Jackson & Duke, 1999; Milstein, 1993), which has been added in recent years to the Academy, sending the students into the field to work with schools to offer solutions and ideas for specific topics and/or problems.

The entire licensure or Masters program, including the initial Academy aspect, must be based on an accountability model, with performance-based standards, in this case, the ELCC standards (Lauder, 2000). Improving the leadership in schools also depends on improving student recruitment and selection (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; LaPlant, Hill, Gallagher & Wagstaff, 1989; Milstein, 1993) into such preparation programs. Many also feel it is necessary to staff the program with a varied faculty, including practicing educators and others with broad-based knowledge about practices necessary for effective schools (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001) for the best chance at moving theory into effective practice.

The program is designed to help students develop the capacity to learn, as opposed to accumulating information (Murphy, 1992), and the emphasis is on depth of experiences, as opposed to content coverage (Murphy, 1992). This is in part due to the intensity of the six-weeks, all day structure of the experience.

COHORT DEVELOPMENT

It may be in the development of the cohort (40+ student participants in the Academy) where the intensity of the all day, all summer, people-intensive situation appears to have the biggest effect. The Academy pulls together a group of forty-plus students from diverse backgrounds and different school districts molding them into a single large cohesive community of practice. Because of the large amount of time with students, the staff can make time to build relationships among the students and with the faculty, which is far different from the traditional "single class, drive in, drive out" relationships that result at many post-graduate programs. In fact, in the first two weeks students find an emphasis on interpersonal communication skills and group building among the tasks of the Academy. "Not surprisingly, the growth and development of these interpersonal skills lead to simultaneous growth and development in the areas of collegiality, valuing of diversity, interdependence, visioning

and reflective practices, as well as discovery learning and andragogy” (McCafferty, Zigler, Leibold, Leibold, & Hill, 1996, p. 8)

The workload placed upon the students is intentionally overwhelming in weeks 2 and 3, pushing them to work as a team and depend on each other. “It might be said that the Academy experience aims to instill not only the knowledge and skills of working collegially but also the inclination to do so—as a leader and as a follower.” (McCafferty, Zigler, Leibold, C., Leibold, G., & Hill, 1996, p. 12) This often initiates the discussion that the job of being a principal cannot be done alone. The development of the cohort, both as individuals and as a group, is key to many other aspects of the Academy and then later to the success of the on-campus part of the preparation program.

Norton’s (1995) study of cohort programs in educational administration programs at UCEA institutions found “the majority of institutions viewed cohort programs as having a better quality of students than previous programs, revealing a higher quality of student scholarship in course work, resulting in greater student commitment to the program and program completion, bringing about a higher level of student, faculty, and institutional socialization, and as resulting in higher levels of student enthusiasm toward course work and the preparation program in general” (p. 34). In that same study, the “differences between cohort programs and previous preparation programs were described by respondents in terms such as more support for learners, greater sense of community, quicker program completion, greater course continuity, more student/faculty interaction, better theory and practice linkages, and so forth” (p. 33). By making the cohort stronger and even more cohesive, the intended result is an even higher degree of those positive results.

In McCafferty, Zigler, Leibold, C., Leibold, G., & Hill (1996), the authors suggest that the “practices in the Academy aim in all ways to model and achieve authentic collegial relationships and practices among participants. Virtually no work is accomplished alone in the Academy unlike most preparation programs and all too many schools” (p. 9). The authors also state that:

Little (1985) defines two norms which change the prevailing perspective on professional improvement from individual to organizational where continuous improvement is a shared undertaking: the norm of collegiality, the expectation of shared work, and the norm of continuous improvement, the expectation of analysis, evaluation, and experimentation on substantive matters of curriculum and instruction. In contrast to educators operating independently with weak ties to one another, Little suggests two key factors to continuous improvement in schools: 1) strong ties among those sharing the work and 2) true interdependence as a condition of the work and its success. She refers to this simply as “joint work. (p. 9)

In moving the cohort to a level of organizational improvement, the group moves toward a true “community of practice,” becoming a model for the participants of what can be done in the schools. It gives the participants an understanding of how this can increase the output of the entire group. This results in collectively solving problems, gaining from the different backgrounds and experiences, as well as sharing knowledge – all for the good of the group or “school.”

REFLECTION

The Academy has a personal reflection strand woven throughout the curriculum and the staff helps to develop that strand for each participant. It is an important piece of the process, and thus the staff takes the time for individual and group reflection. Thanks to the development of the cohort and the personal relationships built in this intense setting, the reflection, while constant, becomes very personal and honest within the group.

In Warren Bennis’ book, *On Becoming a Leader* (1989), he states that “true understanding comes from reflecting on your experience” and believes that it is essential to knowing oneself. For a theory as to the use and importance of reflection, one needs to examine Kolb’s 1984 experiential learning cycle, and the thought that while experience is the basis for learning, learning cannot take place without reflection (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). Thus both the practitioner and the theorist explain the need for reflection in developing leaders (McCafferty, Zigler, Leibold, C., Leibold, G. & Hill, 1996, p. 16). Hart (1993) states that “reflection requires practice and involves different skills from those required for traditional methods of study and learning, because the learner must constantly and consciously draw links among formal knowledge, recommended actions, and

predicted (or observed) outcomes” (p. 341). In order to teach and then practice those skills, students and staff participate in written individual reflection, small and large group reflection, guided and problem-based reflection, personalized instrument feedback, and a personal, reflective, written philosophy on educational leadership. The reflection process is used both at the start and at the completion of each day. Whether reflection takes place in group discussion of case studies, personal reflection on the student interactions, or reflecting on the morning’s instrument feedback over lunch, the reflective process just blankets the Academy, aided by the block of time involved.

Participants have the time to examine deeply what they are experiencing, and they have a caring cohort and faculty to help them make meaning of what is happening. That is very powerful for the students in their gaining an understanding about themselves, as well as watching and learning from the modeling, the activities, and how the group develops and grows. The reflective process is examined and eventually each participant is invited to develop his/her own style of personal reflection. The early attempts directed by the Academy are much more structured until the reflection process is understood and begins to take on a more personal value. (McCafferty, Zigler, Leibold, C., Leibold, G., & Hill, 1996, p. 17)

INQUIRY PROJECT—REAL WORLD PROBLEMS, REAL WORLD SOLUTIONS

The inquiry project was introduced several years ago in order to provide a field-based experience that truly was a real-world experience within the Academy. This adds to the field-based experiences of the regular on-campus part of the program, making this a strong aspect of the overall program. This culminating project requires a group of students to work as a consulting team in the field with one of the local schools. Their goal is to identify issues that a particular school wants information about or solutions researched, and finally, options presented. Thus, as the Academy moves in to its final week, six to seven “teams” are in the field working with the local schools on true educational situations.

This project is compacted into two weeks of the Academy, calling for a high-energy, high-level teaming experience, with a strong academic emphasis on research. It also emphasizes the ability to present their project clearly and persuasively with the new technologies available. The intensity of the real world situation with real world time frames, with the pressure to perform well, puts the group into a great situation from which to learn and grow. The project truly requires them to use all of their learning experiences and communication skills developed during the Academy.

In addition, the pressure of doing this inquiry project right after a previous, yet different, research project recreates the pressurized world of the principal. This situation with the same demands of administrator life can only be simulated in an every-day, all day setting such as found in the Academy.

A STAFF OF ALUMNI PRACTITIONERS

The instructional staff is made up of seven practicing school administrators and one university professor from the department of educational administration. The practicing administrators are also alumni of the Academy and represent elementary and secondary, urban and suburban school administrators. There is also an equitable representation of gender and race, all of which allows the staff to take advantage of the diversity of viewpoints in planning, instruction, problem solving, and working with students from many varied backgrounds.

Arthur Levine’s (2005) study *Educating School Leaders* offers a template for judging the quality of school leadership programs, noting a key component is faculty composition. Having practitioners design the instruction and delivery model of the Academy insures relevant curriculum, case studies, and the natural inclusion of real world issues for school leaders. Having the practitioners develop the cohort model, group work, team building, vision development, connects theory to the real world of leadership, as well as making connections with the social and professional network of the participants with practitioners and their schools.

The instructors work to develop this cohort, as they would the staff in the schools they lead. “The instructors attempt to model behaviors appropriate to working collegially in problem solving efforts typical of a school setting” (McCafferty, 1994, p. 3). While the curriculum has been planned long before, as in the real world, the teaching team is in constant planning and re-planning in order to deal with the daily and unexpected events of the Academy members’ interaction with the content and the activities.

UNIVERSITY AND DISTRICT SUPPORT

McCafferty (1994) stated that the originator (Dr. James LaPlant) believed:

[T]he Academy intended to draw significant investments of time and resources from three stakeholders in the preparation of school administrators: the university, the school systems, and the nominees. The university is interested in the quality of schools and the quality of the leaders in those schools.” (p. 5)

The University, in the past, has shown their support by granting scholarships ranging from 70% tuition for fifteen graduate credit quarter hours for their full-time enrollment in the summer Academy to full tuition. This is a huge demonstration of support to the Academy and its people.

Each school district supports the Academy not only by nominating its best teacher leaders, but also by utilizing mentors, offering those students support in various ways, and working with the university on field-based projects that the students undertake. The alumni of the Academy have also become a strong force of support, and for nominating future Academy candidates.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

According to Ferrigno-Browne and Shoho (2004), “the recruitment and selection processes for entry into university programs remain ‘informal, haphazard, and casual’ (Murphy, 1992, p. 80), with the most prevalent practice being the candidate self-selection” (p. 175). The proactive recruiting approach of the educational administration department, which reaches out to school districts (both principals and superintendents), Academy alumni, and purposefully attempts to recruit a diverse student cohort, creates a situation whereby the university can be selective, which promotes higher entry standards than if it was purely by “self-selection.”

The reputation of the Academy as an outstanding educational experience, along with the fact that the university offers the graduate scholarships, has added intensity to the recruitment and selection for the available participant positions. It is not unusual to have 60 applicants for the approximately 40 positions available each summer. The process involves the traditional application procedures, but also requires a nomination by the participant’s school district, and adds yet another step to the process: a personal interview by school administrators and university faculty.

The interview process was developed by the Academy university faculty several years ago in order to make sure the interview was grounded in either standards or an accepted assessment method. It was derived from the concepts of the Assessment Center program developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1993). The concepts used to ground the interview are *commitment to education, communication skills, interpersonal skills, stress tolerance, breadth of interests, problem solving skills, and listening skills*. Part of the interview includes developing a solution to a written case study that an administrator might have to deal with in a school.

In order to seek out more qualified administrator candidates, the instructional staff offered an “Aspiring Administrators Class” for the city’s large urban school district, with the results being immediate as seen by this past summer’s Academy class. The four class sessions included many abbreviated techniques, methods, activities, and instruments that are normally utilized in the Academy, to create an interest, to inform, and to offer a brief look at what the position really involves.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Administrator Development Academy appears to build a very powerful, cohesive cohort with the skills to work in groups and to get things done. As they work through the rest of the preparation program, many on a “fast-track” toward licensure within a single year, as a group they feel very much a part of the university and as a result, have very positive and close relationships with faculty members. That alliance develops a deeper network of both faculty and students which allows for “more open student discussions with less student posturing, more student sharing, more evaluative feedback from students, and a greater focus on the whole student” (Norton, 1995, p. 26). Again, this appears to strengthen the administrator preparation program.

A very real “ownership” of the Academy and the process is developed by the students, resulting in alumni

practitioner instructors, alumni to interview the next year's candidates, alumni for practitioner panels and celebration/reunion conferences. Alumni stepped up to offer an "aspiring administrators course", a mini-Academy of four sessions, working hand-in-hand with the Cincinnati Public Schools. They tend to come back and they want to see it continue, and they scout the schools to recommend more candidates for the Academy.

After one or two years, it is not unusual for students to come back to the faculty and alumni instructors, and state that "this was the best educational experience I have ever had." "You get out of it what you put into it" is very cliché, but in this case, the commitment on both sides to create, and to be involved in, a very intense educational experience of some duration appears to have created a stronger initial preparation program for the students of the Academy in hopes of developing the strong, facilitative leaders needed for tomorrow's schools.

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